

# THE TIMES



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PLUS 16 pages of Christmas reading

TOMORROW Fighting talk, boxing women

mediaset TV news dumbs up • Jamie Lee Curtis, perfect PR for Lords 42-45

## Psychiatrist called in to hospital

# Pinochet to claim he is unfit for trial

By JOANNA BALE

GENERAL Augusto Pinochet was assessed by a leading psychiatrist yesterday as his lawyers prepared a bid to persuade Jack Straw that he is mentally unfit to stand trial.

The former Chilean dictator is said to be suffering from a stress-related disorder which could give the Home Secretary legal grounds to refuse to extradite him to Spain.

He is under the care of the distinguished psychiatrist, Geoffrey Lloyd, the medical director of the Grovelands Priory Hospital, north London, where he has been recovering from spinal surgery for the past four weeks. A highly-placed medical source said yesterday: "He is undergoing assessment for stress and stress-related disorders. It is well-documented that elderly people frequently react badly to stress."

The general, 83, has surprised doctors by making an excellent recovery from spinal surgery. This would rule out an application that he is unfit to stand trial on physical grounds.

Wednesday's historic House of Lords ruling that the general's status as a former head of state does not protect him from prosecution for genocide is said to have plunged him into a deep depression at what he regards as an unjustified be-



"Gone mad - get out of jail free"

lieved that he is applying for a seven-day extension.

A Home Office spokesman said yesterday: "Under the 1989 Extradition Act, the Home Secretary can refuse extradition on compassionate grounds if a person is considered unfit to stand trial for health reasons."

"Courts go to great lengths to establish someone's fitness to stand trial and it is down to the Home Secretary to interpret the evidence."

General Pinochet was originally under the care of his spinal surgeon, Farhad Afshar, a leading neurosurgeon whose Harley Street practice is next door to Dr Lloyd's. The former dictator was moved to the Grovelands Priory Hospital, a private psychiatric concern, on October 29 to continue his rehabilitation.

But during his stay at the Grovelands it became apparent to staff that he was suffering from severe stress and he was put under the care of Dr Lloyd.

While the general's rigorous assessment is being completed, Chile's Foreign Minister, José Miguel Insulza, will continue to press the case that he has diplomatic and state immunity when he meets Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, in London today.



Celia Larkin, who lives with Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, in Dublin yesterday with Cherie Blair. The two women got on famously

## Blair's historic visit delights Dail

By MARTIN FLETCHER CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

TONY BLAIR used the first speech ever delivered by a British Prime Minister to Ireland's parliament yesterday to herald the end of centuries of Anglo-Irish enmity and the start of a new era of friendship and co-operation.

"So much shared history. So much shared pain. And now the hope of a new beginning," he told 300 Irish parliamentarians and dignitaries who packed the Dail for the historic event and gave him several warm ovations.

"Down through the centuries Ireland and Britain have inflicted too much pain each on the other. But now, the UK and Ireland as two modern

countries, can try to put our histories behind us, try to forgive and forget those age-old enmities."

Mr Blair acknowledged the present deadlock in the peace process and delivered a stern message to Northern Ireland's Unionists and republicans. He said that "we have come too far to go back now", and that it was "time for all the parties to live up to all their commitments". It was "time to set up the institutions of the new government. Time for the gun and the threat of the gun to be taken out of politics once and for all; for decommissioning to start."

"I am not asking anyone to surrender," he said as Gerry Adams watched from the gallery. "I am asking everyone to declare the victory of peace."

Mr Blair suggested that the removal of Northern Ireland as a constant source of friction opened the door to a much wider and deeper relationship between Great Britain and Ireland.

The fact of Mr Blair's address was as important as its content. "Your very presence here today symbolises... the coming of age of the relationship between two countries," Seamus Pattison, Speaker of the Dail, said in his introduction. Mr Blair replied with a few words of ill-pronounced Irish: "Go raibh mile maith agaibh", or "thank you", and "Oireachtas", Irish for the upper and lower houses of parliament. His attempt brought warm applause.

Trevor Sargent, a fluent Irish speaker and Green Party member of parliament, said, however, that President Clinton showed more fluency during his visits to Ireland: "I don't really know how much practice Tony Blair did before he used his phrases, but I got the impression that he was not as carefully rehearsed as Bill Clinton."

Cherie Blair gave a helping hand while in Dublin with her husband and cemented the position of Celia Larkin as Ireland's first lady. Ms Larkin is in the odd position of living with Bertie Ahern, the Prime Minister; he remains married to his estranged wife. Many Roman Catholics have expressed opposition to the relationship, but Mrs Blair and Ms Larkin behaved like old friends throughout the visit after hugging on meeting at Dublin airport.

**New M&S casualty**

The boardroom rift at Marks & Spencer claimed the head of Keith Oates, its deputy chairman. Peter Salsbury, a managing director, was appointed chief executive. Pages 7, 29

**More drivers**

Train companies were pressed by John Prescott to recruit 600 new drivers within the next year. He said the performance on the railways was "unacceptable". Page 2

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**No word for sorry in Japan**

FROM DAVID WATTS IN TOKYO

JAPAN faced two opportunities to break with some of its more unpleasant history yesterday, but shrank from the challenge.

Arthur Titherington, 76, the chairman of the Japanese Labour Camp Survivors' Association, who spent three and a half years in slave labour, was overcome with emotion after Tokyo District Court rejected ex-prisoners' claims for compensation and an apology.

That judgment came as little surprise, but the Japanese Government had given the impression that a full and formal apology for the atrocities of Japanese forces in China from 1937 would be made to President Jiang Zemin.

But Japan's Prime Minister, Keizo Obuchi, employed only the words, "remorse and heartfelt apology" in a statement which neither signed.

Kowtow avoided, page 17

**Family hit by double rape suffers further tragedy**

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE suffering of a family hit by a double tragedy was disclosed yesterday after a burglar was given five life sentences at the Old Bailey for rape.

As William Kenealy went to prison for raping a woman and her nine-year-old daughter, it emerged that the girl's elder sister had drowned in a fountain where her body lay undiscovered for two weeks. The dead woman, who died in shallow water in Kensington Gardens, Central London, is believed to have drowned about three days before the start of the rape trial on November 16.

Her body, with the words "funky pumpkin" tattooed on her stomach, was identified yesterday after being recovered the day before. Police are treating her death as suspicious, but said there was no evidence of foul play.

The rape happened on Christmas night 1996 after family festivities at the flat where the 20-year-old woman had a history of psychiatric illness, left her mother's home to visit friends in London. A member of the park staff saw the body on November 13 after a passer-by reported an object under the water, but he disregarded it as rubbish in the fountain.

Detectives want to interview anyone who saw the woman, who was single and unemployed, during the week after she left her mother's home. She had not been due to give evidence at the trial.

"The mother, a widow and former nurse, described the knife-wielding Kenealy as "pure evil" after he was convicted earlier this week. She said: "He needs to be put down a pit. I could almost forgive him for what he did to me but not for what he did to my daughter."

Kenealy, 25, from Northolt, northwest London, denied twice raping mother and daughter, and later raping a 17-year-old girl.

On November 6 this year, the 20-year-old woman, who used to live, while her mother, 55, and younger sister were sleeping in a shared bed. It came after the elder daughter had gone out for the evening and her mother had been unable to lock the patio doors through which Kenealy walked.

On November 6 this year, the 20-year-old woman, who



Kenealy: denied raping mother and daughter

**Books for schools campaign**

By VICTORIA FLETCHER

THE TIMES today launches the biggest initiative to replenish the shelves of school libraries.

Millions of free books will be available as part of the Free Books for Schools scheme, which has the backing of David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

More than 14,000 schools have already registered for the scheme, which is being promoted by News International plc and Walkers Snack Foods Ltd.

The scheme offers a range of 150 different titles for each participating school in return for tokens found in *The Times* and other News International newspapers, as well as on packets of Walkers snack foods. The tokens will start appearing in the New Year.

Books offer, pages 8,9  
 Leading article, page 25

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## Centre for tearaways ordered to shape up

By RICHARD FORD HOME CORRESPONDENT

ELEVEN teenage tearaways are to be removed from Britain's troubled first child jail as the Home Office last night ordered urgent refurbishments and improvements in staff training.

The tough action plan was ordered by Paul Boateng, a Home Office Minister, who visited Medway Secure Training Centre near Rochester four days after an investigation by *The Times* disclosed a history of unrest, damage and staff departures at the unit. The inter-

vention by Mr Boateng was, however, clouded by the news that Sue Clifton, the director of the centre, has been appointed as an unpaid adviser to the Youth Justice Board, offering advice on secure facilities for young people.

The minister said he had asked Rebound, the Group 4 subsidiary which runs the centre, to implement a "refurbishment" programme so as to ensure a high standard of care, control, education and training as required by its contract. He rebuked Rebound which admits that it was taken aback by the violent behaviour of many of the of-

fenders. The centre opened this year. "We expect Rebound to deliver to these young people in conditions in which their welfare and public safety are secured. Nothing less will do," he said.

The offenders have been excluded from schools for an average of four years and each of the 60 who have spent time there had been convicted of an average of seven serious offences.

Mr Boateng was fully aware that a social services inspection team had criticised the centre, which can hold a maximum of 40 12-14-year-old persistent offenders. He said: "Whilst there

are clearly some difficulties at Medway which I want to see put right, there is a willingness amongst those working there to get to grips with these problems. We should all be aware that the children placed have troubled backgrounds and are characterised by challenging behaviour. They require a high standard of care and management if they are to get to grips with their offending and make something of their young lives."

While work on the centre is being carried out the number of inmates will be reduced to 25. There are presently 36 children there.

48

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# Caravanner stands coolly amid her colourless colleagues

If the former Welsh Secretary Ron Davies's favourite song is *I am what I am*, Margaret Beckett could find her theme tune in the Elton John songbook: *I'm still standing, after all these years*...

For the Leader of the House — formerly President of the Board of Trade, formerly Shadow Trade and Industry Secretary, formerly Shadow Health Secretary, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and Campaigns Co-ordinator, for a short time Acting Labour Leader after John Smith's

death, and Shadow Chancellor before that — this is only the later phase of her political career. Earlier, as Margaret Jackson, she was a formidable minister in the Education Department, overseeing the comprehensive of schools. This woman is no quitter.

And Mrs Beckett is still standing, cool under fire, crisp, brisk and demure in her elegant trouser-suits and hard hair. Unfussed and unpretentious, she is an underrated asset to Labour at Westminster: a steady presence dyed in the

natural hues of her party, not one of your new Labour Instant Whip politicians marketed in a bewildering range of artificial colourings, all vanilla.

Beckett's moods range from playful to icy but she never shouts. She has a steely quality. Such passion as she commands is expended quietly.

Wholly lacking airs and graces and an 'out' caravanner, she has never complained at this sketch — except once. After an unfortunate robbery at her home in Derby 1 remarked that one of Britain's



**MATTHEW PARRIS**  
POLITICAL SKETCH

finest collections of plastic earrings had been dispersed beyond recovery.

Mrs Beckett politely put me right: some of her earrings were Royal Doulton. When I wrote a sketch about a fly that had become caught in her hair during a press-conference, she presented me with a fly-swat. Before fielding a labyrinthine briefing about possible

Lords tactics in the new Session, Mrs Beckett's lot was to face her weekly grilling by MPs on the forthcoming "Business of the House". Business Questions bear no more than a nodding acquaintance with Business: really just an opportunity for backbenchers to throw wet sponges at some-

body in the Government. Mrs Beckett endured the kiddies' playtime with her usual poise. She has pioneered a new, non-nonsense approach to dealing with inquiries to which she does not know the answer: she replies that she does not know the answer. In *British politics* this is an astonishing novelty and leaves questioners floundering.

Only Dennis Skinner (Lab. Bolsover) slightly flustered her. In mocking reprise of a phrase of Peter Mandelson's, Mr Skinner told the Govern-

ment that for General Pinochet to be let off the hook by the Home Secretary would be pretty gut-wrenching stuff. Oh yes, Skinner's still standing.

The debate following was led by Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, a thoughtful, moderate, genial old socialist. Mr Dobson, too, is still standing — a Corinthian column, one of a few still upright among the rubble of a collapsed ideology. He was his usual, boisterous self.

Not much later, Michael Heseltine rose. With easy grace

he swung a few desultory punches at the Government, just to show he still can, cheering up his own side immensely. Even when — as yesterday — the engine is only idling at the amber lights with a little rev here and there by way of display, we are reminded of the horsepower under that rhetorical bonnet.

In an age of Nescafé politics and Nescafé politicians, it is good to encounter, in Beckett, Skinner, Dobson, Heseltine, the sounds of the coffee-grinder and the aroma of real coffee.

# Prescott urges train firms to recruit drivers

TRAIN companies were pressed by John Prescott last night to recruit 800 new drivers within the next year as he said the performance on the railways was "unacceptable".

The Deputy Prime Minister has no statutory power to force the train companies to recruit drivers but he made it clear to a meeting of rail industry leaders that only companies that commit themselves to improving the service will be considered for future railway contracts. And, continuing his tough line, he told them that they had 12 months to improve punctuality and other standards before tougher laws are introduced to tighten regulation of the rail network.

However, Mr Prescott admitted that introducing improvements "will be a long haul" as senior rail managers concede that punctuality could worsen over the coming months before standards get better.

Shortages of drivers across the country have been blamed by many of the 25 train operators for problems in running punctual services. However, some 2,500 drivers lost their jobs in the run-up to privatisation, leaving some 14,000 in the new private industry.

The driver shortage, which has coincided with substantial increases in the number of train services, has forced many operators into an intense recruitment battle, with staff being poached at salaries of more than £25,000, especial-

**Deputy Prime Minister says performance is unacceptable, writes Arthur Leathley**

ly by firms running long distance services.

Despite Mr Prescott's demands that train companies set out immediate plans to improve services he admitted that it would be some time before passengers saw higher standards. "It would be a long haul but today we saw a very positive step towards improving the system," he said after meeting rail industry leaders and regulators at his office.

The meeting was called by ministers exasperated at the worsening standards of punctuality over the last year, which have taken many train services back to the levels of British Rail. At yesterday's meeting, operators and Railtrack agreed to set up a joint working group to identify and tackle the 50 worst blackspots for delays and cancellations. Railtrack, the track and signalling company, has already identified some 20 sections of track that cause greatest congestion, but the firm has been criticised by the rail regulator, John Swift, for being too

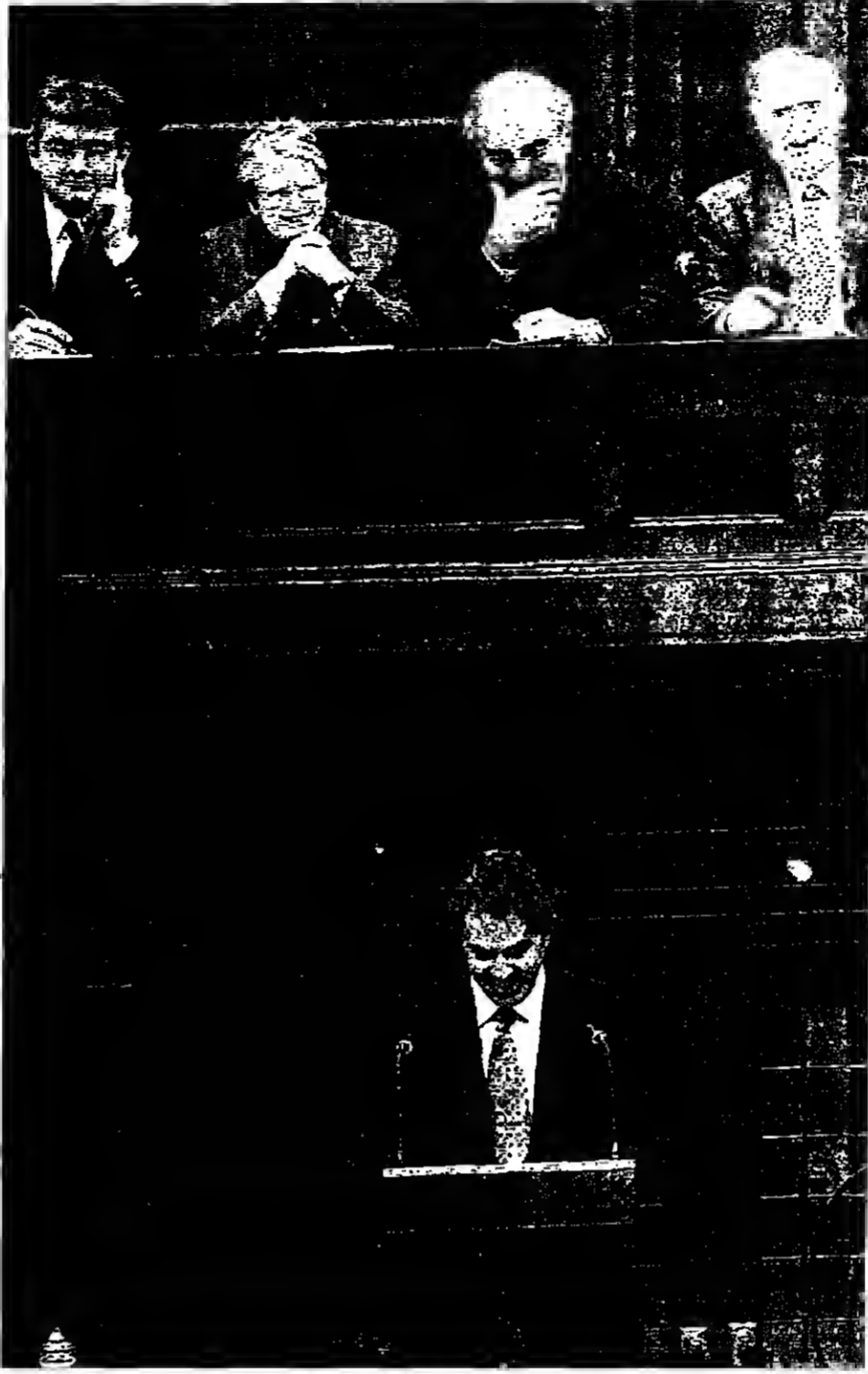
vague in its timetable for relieving the bottlenecks.

Most of the worst sections are on the commuter routes into London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Edinburgh but there are also other parts of the network that require extra track because the current two-track layout is proving inadequate.

Mr Prescott ordered the companies to set firm proposals by next February, when they will be called to a public meeting at which passengers will be able to question them on their plans.

Ministers also confirmed that they are planning to widen the range of targets that will be taken into consideration when deciding whether train companies will be allowed to renew their franchises. Currently, punctuality, train cancellations and overcrowding remain the main standards by which operators are judged and penalised financially. However ministers also plan to include levels of passenger satisfaction over issues such as the cleanliness of trains, attitude of staff and levels of on-board catering.

John Reid, the Transport Minister who also attended yesterday's meeting, said that punctuality and cancellations would remain the most important factors, said He added that ministers would be setting up a shadow Strategic Rail Authority by next spring to co-ordinate policy between regulators and the industry.



Tony Blair makes his historic speech to the Dublin parliament yesterday, watched by Irish MPs

# Undercover police may hunt for racists

BLACK London police officers may go undercover to test whether colleagues are racist and corruption investigators will set up traps with marked cash under Scotland Yard plans for "integrity tests".

The tests being planned by Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, could be targeted at stations, units or individuals who come under suspicion but senior officers say that the operations could also be random.

Investigators might be infiltrated into the stations as "sleepers" posing as ordinary officers to get close to suspects. Cases could be set up where police are confronted with large amounts of cash or drugs.

Unknown to the officers the evidence would in fact be marked or monitored by hidden cameras and microphones. Last month two former Flying Squad officers were convicted for a cannabis conspiracy.

If there are suspicions of racism the investigators may enrol members of local communities to help them check allegations of racial bias and language towards members of the ethnic communities. The Yard could also use black officers posing as civilians. A number already work undercover for the Yard's SO11 criminal intelligence unit.

The plans are the latest move by Sir Paul to drive corruption out of his force. Detectives from his enlarged complaints investigation bureau will also target officers suspected of fabricating evidence in investigations.

# Councillor resigns after arrest

A councillor praised by Tony Blair for his leadership has resigned as head of his party group after being arrested by fraud squad detectives. Malcolm Glover is the second leader of the controlling Labour group on Doncaster council in south Yorkshire to resign within two years after being questioned by officers investigating corruption. He was appointed in March last year to replace Peter Welsh, who was also questioned by police.

Mr Glover, 47, was arrested on Wednesday by officers working on the Operation Danum investigation into claims of expenses fiddling, the awarding of contracts and helping developers obtain planning permission. Before the local government elections Mr Glover apologised for the council's poor performance.

# CPS accused

The Crown Prosecution Service was yesterday accused of wasting millions of pounds following the collapse of a court case against two animal rights activists. After four years of legal argument, a judge has thrown out charges against Paul Rogers and Robin Webb of inciting arson and criminal damage by publishing articles in the animal rights magazine *Green Anarchist*, on the ground that the charges were wrongly worded.

# Cash for colleges

The Government yesterday announced £720 million to improve standards of learning and the appearance of further education colleges, in support of its pledge to add 400,000 places to FE colleges before the next election. Announcing the money at the annual conference of the Association for Colleges in Harrogate, David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, said he expected colleges to work hard to raise standards.

# Director quits

The executive appointed to oversee a restructuring of the Arts Council of England has resigned unexpectedly. The departure of Graham Marchant, 45, six months after he was appointed executive director of arts and policy, astounded the arts community. The former general manager of the North London dance centre, The Place, and administrator at Opera North was brought in last June to slim down the Arts Council operation.

# Patten sees his future in Europe

CHRIS PATTEN yesterday gave the strongest signal yet that he would like his political future to be in Europe rather than Westminster.

The former Hong Kong governor said that he would be "delighted" to be approached as Britain's next European Commissioner when the job becomes available next year. He contrasted his enthusiasm for the Brussels post with scepticism for the other possibilities open to him, namely returning to the Commons as an MP or running for mayor of London.

The former Tory chairman and ex-MP for Bath said that there was a "very, very bad track record" of trying to parachute party grandees into the Commons, and suggested that he might not be whole-

hearted enough to throw himself into constituency business for a second time. And although not ruling himself out of the race to become the Tories' candidate for mayor, he raised doubts about whether the role would have enough executive powers to make it a credible job.

But asked about the job of succeeding Sir Leon Brinlan as one of Britain's two European Commissioners next year, Mr Patten said: "It's an interesting idea. If anybody wants to talk to me about it I would be delighted to hear from them."

Although William Hague has suggested that he could accept Mr Patten in the job, such a move would present him with political difficulties because he has already put forward Alastair Goodlad, the

former Tory Chief Whip, as his nomination. With Neil Kinnock holding the other post, the vacancy would by convention go to a Tory. The Prime Minister, who makes the appointment, is known to think highly of Mr Patten and gave him the job of heading the commission into the future of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Although predicting that William Hague would be the next Tory Prime Minister, Mr Patten criticised the party leader's policy of ruling out the single currency for the lifetime of the next parliament: "Wajoning and seeing is more sensible than waiting a very long time and then seeing."

But he also took a sideswipe at Mr Blair's adoption of the "Third Way" as the Government's guiding philosophy.

# West too weak to keep peace, says Portillo

NUCLEAR confrontation is more likely than at any time in the last 30 years because of the collapse of the West's moral authority, Michael Portillo will say today.

In an outspoken attack on the way the Nato alliance has responded to recent emergencies in Kosovo and Iraq, the former Defence Secretary will become the first senior British politician to suggest that President Clinton's troubles over the Monica Lewinsky contro-

very have damaged western interests. In a speech to the Royal United Services Institute in London, Mr Portillo will not name the president.

But he will say: "Our wish no longer hold sway, our words no longer convince and our willpower no longer impresses. When Western leaders are involved in scandals, respect for the West is reduced further, and with it our influence too."

His main criticism, howev-

er, will be directed at the failure of other European governments sufficiently to back Britain and the United States in the crises of the last few months. Referring to the series of Nato warnings to Saddam Hussein over weapons inspections in Iraq, he says: "An Iraqi undertaking was considered sufficient reason to call off the mission, even though an American official described it as being full of holes."

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## Moth has got custom

## Nine O'Clock survivors pagan rit

## Experts cast of Anglo-Saxo

مكتبة من الأصل

Peers

he swung a few... punches at the Government...

NEWS IN BRIEF

Councillor resigns after arrest... The councillor praised by Tony...

Mother's day has gone, says custody judge

A JUDGE has given a boost to "father power" by ruling that a father was the right parent of a broken marriage...

The stereotype of parental roles is losing ground in child access cases, reports Frances Gibb

whereas the father was likely to allow the child to remain in contact with his mother...

But the reality is that the mother does get the child, unless there is some strong factor against her.

Jim Parton, the chairman of the fathers' rights group, Families Need Fathers, welcomed the ruling...

But, he said, such rulings still made up only a tiny minority of all decisions about the care of a child.

He emphasised that the way forward was not for the child to go to one parent or the other, but for courts to make more use of joint residence orders.

"We are all victims of the present adversarial system in which the winner takes all. That is where it all goes wrong," he said.

Another ruling which gave a judicial boost to fathers' rights was in August this year, when a father who stayed at home while his wife worked, was granted sole rights to bring up their three children because of his role as the full-time carer.



The newly crowned Miss World, Linor Abargil from Israel, after winning the title in the Seychelles last night

Israel scoops unwanted double

TO WIN one maligned competition could be considered unlucky, but to win two could be construed as careless. The unlikely honour fell to Israel last night when it added the title of Miss World to the Eurovision Song Contest.

Eric Morley, who organised the first contest in 1951, insists the contest has shed its bathing beauty image and is now more about elegance and intelligence. As if to back up his claims, it emerged that Miss Abargil wants a career in media communications and dances jazz, classical, modern and ballet.

Miss Abargil edged out Miss France, Veronique Caloc, who came second, and Miss Malaysia, Piek Lim Lina Teoh, to win the title. The new Miss World, who takes over from Diana Hayden of India, will have to address audiences across the world during her one-year reign.

Children tortured schoolboy for three hours

A BROTHER and sister who tortured a boy for nearly three hours after abducting him on his way home from school have been detained for a total of seven and a half years. Their 11-year-old victim was repeatedly kicked, punched, stabbed, beaten with socks and thrown into a river after being frogmarched to a lonely park. He suffered more than 40 injuries before he staggered home to his parents nearly a mile away, Carlisle Crown Court was told.

Nine O'Clock survivors hold pagan ritual

MEMBERS of Sheffield's notorious Nine O'Clock Service, disbanded after its leader was found to have abused women members, are still going strong and recently celebrated a pagan festival in a Church of England chapel, it is disclosed today. The surviving members of the service, now renamed the Nine O'Clock Community, celebrated Samhain, a pagan fire festival, in a service that made no reference to Jesus Christ.

Morphine killed surgeon's wife

A GP's future was in the balance today after he was convicted of the manslaughter of a consultant's wife he was treating for a migraine. Meer Abdul Raheem killed Patsy Helm, 41, with an overdose of pain-killing morphine 20 times the normal dose. He had denied her manslaughter in May 1996 while working for a GP deputising service.

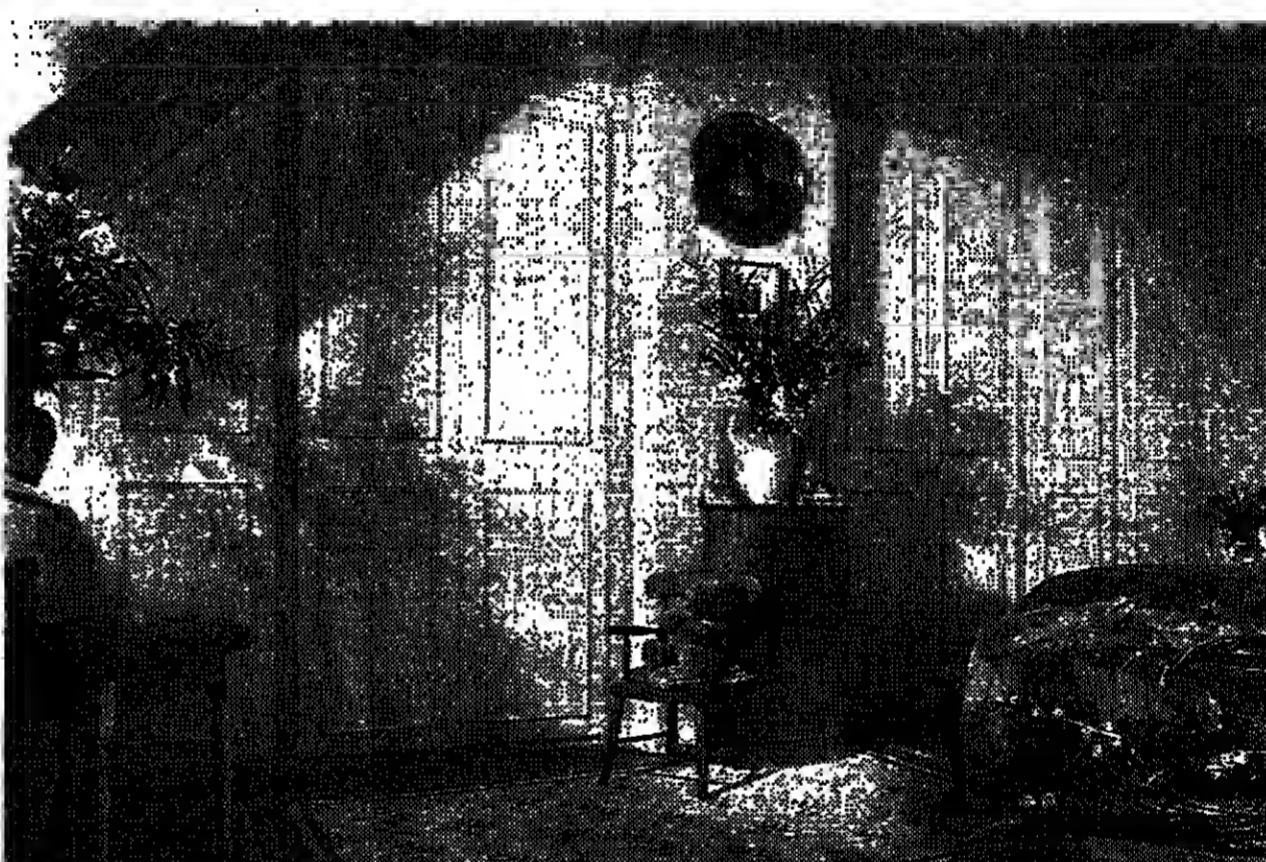


Table with columns for location and phone numbers under the heading 'SHOWROOMS NATIONWIDE'.

Experts cast doubt on site of Anglo-Saxon sword find

THE mystery surrounding the discovery of a rare golden Anglo-Saxon sword found in Melton, near Hull, last year to a farmer's field in Melton. Mr Wilding said that he found the four-inch pommel inside a clay boulder with a second-hand children's detector that he had bought at a car boot sale for £10.

Advertisement for 'The SHARPS Autumn SALE' featuring a large '55% OFF PLUS AN EXTRA 10% OFF' and images of bedrooms. Includes contact information for showrooms and a free call number.



# Santas sit exam in running a grotto

### Simon de Bruxelles on Britain's first Father Christmas diploma

THE telephone rings at the other end of the line. "Hello, shopping centre security," a voice answers. "Can you put me through to Santa's grotto please?"

Click. "Good morning, Father Christmas speaking."

"Hello, this is Simon de Bruxelles from *The Times*. Is that Rex?"

"No, this is Father Christmas."

"Well, would you mind if I had a word with you about the course you are running in Santa studies?"

"Only if you say hello to the children first. This call is being broadcast through a teddy bear which moves his mouth when you talk. Say hello, children."

Childish giggles in the background. I have finally tracked Santa to his lair.

Rex, a middle-aged man who will only answer to the name Father Christmas, is running Britain's first course in Santa Clausing.

For the past eight weeks three students at an adult education college in Somerset have been learning how to befriend children without scaring their parents. No longer is it enough to dress up in a red costume, wear a cotton wool beard and slap your thighs while chortling "Ho, Ho, Ho".

Not only does today's Santa have to study voice projection and "ambient lighting for grottos", he has to produce a certificate from the police proving that he has a clean record.

Santa has been having a lean time recently: only half the number of stores have grot-

tos this year compared to last. Many department stores have banned children from sitting on Santa's knee, fearing it could be misconstrued.

Father Christmas said: "For 364 days of the year parents tell their children not to talk to strangers. When they take them to see Santa they tell them not only to talk to this total stranger but also to sit on his knee in a strange room."

"We want to help parents feel absolutely sure that their children are with a trustworthy person."

Students are given trained in all aspects of Santa Clausing, including the history of Father Christmas, understanding the public, running your own grotto, choosing toys, how to train elves and dealing with difficult situations.

After the eight-week course, fully qualified Santas can hope to earn anything between £8 and £25 an hour.

The three graduates of Weston College in Weston-super-Mare who were aged between 35 and 73 have taken their diplomas in Santa Clausing and have found work in local shopping malls.

Kath Panes, the head of adult education, said: "We believe this is a professional job and that it should be treated as such. All people who pass the course gain a diploma and next year we hope to take on students from all over on our residential course."

Hundreds of inquiries have been received from as far away as Canada and Sweden since details of the course were released on the Internet.



Visitors to The Body will enter at the base of the torso. Inside they will learn about gurgles, heartbeats and how the organs deal with a hangover

# Legless man to greet Dome visitors

BY MARK HENDERSON

A GIANT abstract sculpture showing a male and female figure embracing will welcome visitors to the Millennium Dome. It was announced yesterday.

The monumental figures, dubbed "The Body", are 90ft high and 200ft long and form the centrepiece of the Body Zone — the first exhibit the public will see on entering the £758 million canopy in 2000.

The man reclines on an elbow with his left arm embracing the woman and both figures lean towards the entrance of the Dome in a gesture of welcome. They are joined at the torso, leaving only the woman with legs.

The sleek design, by the architect Nigel Coates, echoes Henry Moore and removes the "giggle factor" of showing genitalia by giving the male figure an upper half only. Earlier plans for a single male, female or asexual figure were abandoned in part because of worries about the effect of large or absent private parts.

Visitors will enter at the base of the torso and climb an escalator to take a tour

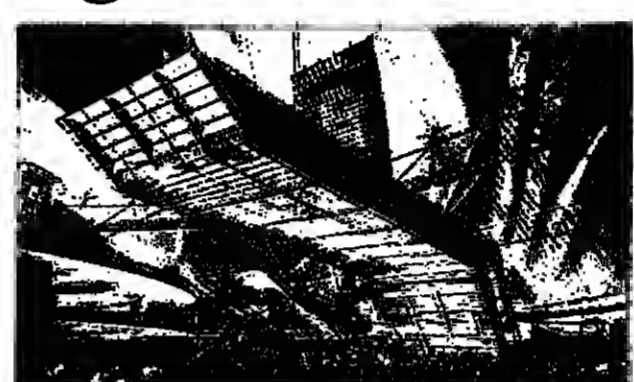
through the workings of the human body. One section will explain how your insides deal with a hangover, and another will concentrate on body sounds — the heartbeat and the gurgles of the stomach. The exit route leaves through the legs, into an interactive "exploration area" on health, beauty and medical advances.

The long-awaited final design for The Body was unveiled yesterday to mark the landmark of 400 days until the site in Greenwich, south east London, opens its doors on December 31, 1999. Earlier designs for the figure included large male or female figures, and a mother and baby.

It will be sponsored by £12 million from Boots the Chemist.

Michael Grade, a director of the New Millennium Experience Company, said: "It is about getting into the body and finding out how you deal with things like a hangover."

Detailed plans for the Mind Zone were also revealed for the first time. An ambitious, gravity-defying shell designed by the Iranian-born architect Zaha Hadid, which has been



The Mind Zone has been compared to a diving board

likened to a giant diving-board, will house a celebration of the human brain and its creative power.

Visitors will be able to see scans of their own brains, showing how different parts respond to different stimuli, and there will be explanation of the brain's powers of recovery — one exhibit will show its ability to "rewire" itself after an accident.

There will be a "Robot Zoo" showing the development of artificial intelligence from the 1950s to the present day and the future, and an ambitious film will explore space from

the tiniest particles to satellite images. British Aerospace and GEC were named as joint sponsors of the zone, each contributing £6 million, prompting some disquiet about the involvement of two of Britain's largest arms exporters.

Jennie Page, chief executive of the New Millennium Experience Company, said: "All the technology on show in the Mind Zone will have a civil application. We are not looking to have defence as a topic anywhere in the Dome."

There was further controversy about the role of the American fast-food chain McDon-

ald's as the £12 million sponsor of Our Town Story, a daily pageant featuring different communities around Britain. One Liberal Democrat MP said that the involvement of such firms was turning the Dome into little more than a "trade fair".

McDonald's will have two of the 30 food outlets inside the Dome, Ms Page said. She also announced that the 5,000 capacity Baby Dome was likely to show films "celebrating one of the greatest gifts to the world of the last 2,000 years — the British sense of humour."

Total sponsorship for the Dome has now reached £120 million, just £30 million short of its £150 million target, and Ms Page said advanced negotiations were under way over another £15 million.

London Transport's chief executive was attacked by MPs yesterday after setting a "last minute date" — the end of next October — to finish the Jubilee Line in time for the opening of the Dome. The Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee criticised Denis Tunncliffe for not having any contingency plans in place.

# Private schools claim distortion in tables

BY VICTORIA FLETCHER

THREE QUARTERS of independent schools will have their performance misrepresented in the league tables to be published next week, the private sector schools body claimed yesterday.

Schools such as Winchester College, one of the most academically successful in the country, will be shown to have achieved grades 10 per cent worse than their candidates' actual results.

The problem has arisen because the Department for Education bases its statistics only on the grades of pupils who were 15 at the beginning of the school year in which they took their GCSEs. In many independent schools and some state schools, however, a small number of pupils in the GCSE year are just over or just under this statutory age. Although the results of the under-age pupils are included in the year that they pass 15, children taking the examinations when they are over the age cohort appear, statistically speaking, as failures.

A survey by the Independent Schools Information Service compared the results of 470 fee-paying schools with the figures for those schools published by the Government. For one in four of these schools, the official statistics will show them performing more than 10 per cent worse than they actually did. Boarding schools, which have higher proportions of pupils from overseas or whose previous education has been disrupted, were particularly hard hit.

The actual GCSE points score achieved at Felsted School in Essex was 51.2, but it is given as only 44.3 in Department for Education figures. The headmaster, Stephen Roberts said: "Despite meetings and letters, the [department] continues to publish statistics which do not represent fairly the performance of schools and their pupils."

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**ONLY 50P**

# Sick husband saved by wife in a million

A WOMAN is to give her ailing husband a new lease on life by giving him one of her kidneys.

Doctors have discovered that the couple, related only by marriage, have not only the same blood group but the same cell structure, giving the best possible chance of a successful transplant.

Peter Creteau, 58, an electronic engineer from Corfe Mullen in Dorset, was told that he would probably have to wait for at least five years for a transplant operation when he was diagnosed with renal failure.

With 5,500 people on the national transplant waiting list his chances of finding a suitable donor were slim and he faced years of relying on a dialysis machine. It was then that his wife Raphaella volunteered to give him one of her kidneys.

"I made up my mind that I would offer one of my kidneys, but I didn't tell Peter until we were in front of the doctors."

**Kidney swap couple have beaten huge odds against donor operation, writes Ian Murray**

she said last night. "They said our children were more likely to be a match, but I felt their life span is greater than mine so I should be the first to be eliminated."

Doctors told her that as she was not a blood relative it was unlikely that she would be a suitable donor. She was born in Italy and he in France but she insisted they carried out tests anyway.

"I was amazed to discover it was a perfect match," she said. "The doctor said he'd never heard of it happening in Britain before. It was absolutely

phenomenal. We were both stunned when we came out of hospital.

"I told Peter after 33 years of marriage we finally found something we had in common — the same blood group. That broke the tension."

"One doctor told me it was a chance in a million. My only worry is in case anything goes wrong with the operation, but the surgeons have said there is a 96 per cent chance of success because it is a live transplant."

"Nothing in life is 100 per cent so we decided to have a go for it, it's just amazing."

Mr Creteau said: "It's absolutely amazing to share some thing in life with your wife other than material things. I am more worried about Raphaella having her operation than me, because hers is far more difficult."

Rachel Stoddard-Murden, transplant co-ordinator at Deriford Hospital, said: "The chances of a wife being a match for her husband are less than 1 per cent."



Peter and Raphaella Creteau: doctors were amazed that their cells matched so well

# BA pilot accepts damages over surgery

BY TIM JONES

A PILOT who claimed his career was destroyed after a failed reverse circumcision shattered his confidence yesterday accepted more than £800,000 in damages to end his High Court action.

James Williams, 42, had been seeking more than £3 million in compensation from John Pryor, the consultant surgeon who operated to give him a new foreskin, but said he found it too traumatic to continue the case. Mr Williams has made a complaint to the General Medical Council against Mr Pryor, who operated on him at the private Lister Hospital in Chelsea.

The court heard that the skin graft Mr Williams had received in a reverse circumcision operation in 1994, designed to cure discomfort during sex, had turned gangrenous and he had almost lost his penis. Nicholas Levisser, his counsel, had told the judge: "The effects have been catastrophic. His moods are volatile. His self-confidence has gone and his nerves are shot."

Last night, Laurence Vick, his solicitor, said: "Mr Williams considers himself extremely fortunate to have survived this operation. He suffered the most appalling injuries to his abdomen and genitals as a result of what he understood was to be a straightforward procedure involving a short hospital stay."

Mr Vick added: "These events resulted in the loss of his career as an airline pilot after he had to be medically retired by British Airways. It had been his life-long ambition to fly and he is understandably bitter." The past four years, he said, had been a great strain for his client, who had suffered humiliation and trauma pursuing the claim.

However, he added, Mr Williams "feels passionately this is a course of action he had to take to prevent this happening to anyone else".

Since the operation, in December 1994, the court was told, Mr Williams, who earned £66,000 a year flying Jumbo Jets, had become a broken man who suffered from such depression and post-traumatic stress he was unlikely to fly again. He had undergone six operations to repair the damage he had suffered and had lost his family and his home in Devon.

In a statement issued through the Medical Defence Union, Mr Pryor, who denied negligence or breach of duty, said: "I did not have the opportunity to give evidence in court but I maintain that his complex surgery was performed properly and competently."

# Neglect charges levelled at carers

BY MARK HENDERSON

FIVE carers were being questioned over neglect allegations last night after detectives and social workers raided a residential home in Essex for vulnerable children and adults.

Two women aged 59 and 39 were held on suspicion of neglect and perverting the course of justice, while two other women, both aged 61, also face neglect charges.

A fifth carer, a man aged 26, was arrested in Cornwall and was being returned to Colchester last night for questioning.

Officers and social workers from the Essex child protection unit made the arrests following allegations of physical abuse of residents of the Old Convent in Bicknacre, near Chelmsford.

More than 100 police and social workers were involved on the raid, which began at 7.30 am yesterday.

"Twelve children and fourteen adults staying at the home, which is run by an independent charity, were taken to new accommodation in Colchester, 15 miles away.

Detective Chief Superintendent Lee Weavers, head of Essex CID, said: "The focus of the intervention today was on behalf of the children and vulnerable adults with disabilities."

"Our principle objective was to ensure the safety of the residents while minimising their anxiety and any possible distress."

Officers plan to search the premises for three to five days for evidence. A helpline has been set up for concerned relatives of residents.

The home has been run by the independent Family In Trust since 1985.



Williams' complaint to Medical Council

# Straw defends leadership style

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

JACK STRAW, the Home Secretary, last night turned on critics who accused the Government of "control freakery" and said that what they were witnessing was strong leadership. The Government's style was one of "effective government, a government with a clear purpose".

Labour's manifesto commitments, particularly on constitutional reform, could not be carried out without such effective leadership, he said.

Speaking yesterday at a conference organised by Democratic Audit and Charter 88, sponsored by *The Times*, Mr Straw took the opportunity to respond to critics of Tony Blair's centrist government.

Radical policies such as devolution and transfer of powers required a "strong and confident government."

"For such a radical process of change to be effective and enduring, it does need to be managed in a co-ordinated and structured way."

Mr Straw also used the occasion to nail the impression that he was "a leading oppo-

nent of Freedom of Information".

The Home Secretary, who was given responsibility for the proposed new draft FoI Bill by Mr Blair last summer, denied the charge and said he had already taken a number of steps to make the Home Office more open.

Mr Straw has ordered that all official statistics should be published independently of Ministers. He has also published all immigration and casework manuals, except those covering intelligence, law enforcement and sensitive areas and has decided to give proper reasons for his decision to refuse any applications for British citizenship.

Mr Straw has also pledged to publish all findings of Sir David Ramsbottom, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, and to set up voluntary registers of freemasons in the criminal justice system.

He made clear, however, that he was keen to ensure the detail of the draft bill was "right" but expected to publish in the new year.

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THE TIMES

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BONHAM

BA pilot accepts damages over surgery

By Tim Jones

THE pilot claimed the... destroyed after a... reverse... confidence... more than... damages to... Court action.

Shades of MI5 in battle for top store job



Ex-spy master was caught in unprecedented web of intrigue, says Patience Wheatcroft

THE former Director-General of MI5, Dame Stella Rimington, became a director of Marks & Spencer last year.

For 2 1/2 weeks, Brian Baldock, a former deputy chairman of Guinness, led the attempts to resolve the battle over who should run M&S.

The result of their deliberations was revealed yesterday, Peter Salsbury being promoted to chief executive of the firm and the deputy chairman, Keith Oates, clearing his desk and continuing to negotiate a pay-off.

After the intense secrecy of the last couple of weeks, it was a day of high drama for M&S as the identity of the chosen one was revealed to the Stock Exchange and the man himself was introduced to the world's media.



Dame Stella: familiar world of intrigue

multimillion-pound business in need of change. They are also concerned about how much authority he will have, given the continuing presence of Sir Richard Greenbury as chairman until mid-2000.

However, nearly three weeks ago they were forced to

fied that decision, and from that moment, the entire board were united behind their man. Any qualms they may have had about his ability to pioneer change in the organisation or to stand up to his chairman were instantly buried.

So yesterday morning, Peter Salsbury was introduced to the world as the new chief executive of Marks & Spencer. The world was unimpressed. But in the afternoon he was ushered into a room where 120 M&S executives awaited their new leader and greeted with a 2 1/2 minute standing ovation.

Now Dame Stella and her colleagues will be monitoring his performance with the intensity of guardians of the national interest.



Shoppers at the M&S store at Marble Arch yesterday: Maureen Spencer, Dennis House, Jacqueline Billingsley and Gary Reeves

'The street cred image has gone too far'

By Susie Steiner

THERE was no shortage of advice from shoppers at the store at Marble Arch yesterday.

Though business was brisk, customers criticised its clothing ranges, said its regional shops were badly stocked and that it was high time the retailer accepted credit cards.

Her husband, Dennis, 61, shops at the chain about once a month ("usually trailing behind my wife") and said

said M&S's efforts to shake off its frumpy image had gone too far. "They have gone for street cred but I'm in my forties and there is nothing for people of my age group," she said.

Her husband, Dennis, 61, shops at the chain about once a month ("usually trailing behind my wife") and said

regional stores were disappointing. "We live in Guildford and that store has definitely been demoted. We have to go to a bigger one to shop. They are in decline and cutting back, but they are putting pressure on the customer to travel to get to a decent store."

Gary Reeves, 35, of Docklands, East London, shops in M&S about once a week and said he appreciated the chain's policies. "They are number one in the high street - everyone in the street has got a green bag. But they have to get a handle on fashion, particularly in the regional stores. It's fine in Marble Arch, but go somewhere like Grantham and it's really poor."

Gerry Bradley, 27, of Beckenham, South London, said it was still "deeply uncool" to shop for clothes in Marks & Spencer. "It's a perception thing. It's an old man's shop. I wouldn't buy anything at M&S but my dad would have a great time." But he added: "The food is fantastic. We both work and the ready meals are fabulous."

Maureen Spencer, 61, of Woking, Surrey, praised the M&S Christmas pudding as unsurpassed, but was disappointed in the clothing. "We have bought nothing," she said. "They have gone too teenage, which is all wrong. I want a sweater that covers my backside and that keeps me warm. The clothes are too longer for the average person in the street."

Advertisement for VAIO featuring a laptop with a portrait on the screen. Text includes 'was building bricks', 'now alien submarine', 'by tim aged 4', 'was camoorder', 'now special effects studio', 'by vaio', and the VAIO logo.

Advertisement for Bonhams featuring a horse and rider. Text includes 'Printed Books, Maps & Manuscripts', 'Auction: 1 & 2 December', 'Viewing from Friday 27 Nov', 'Includes: Bloch, Ichthyologic, 1795, £20-30,000; Gould, Birds of New Guinea, £30-35,000; An elaborate manuscript made for Charles I, £30-40,000; Colour plate books relating to India, Antigua and elsewhere; an outstanding letter by G.B. Shaw.', 'For further information, please call David Park on: 0171 393 3986', 'Bonhams, Montpelier Street, London SW7 1HH', and the BONHAMS logo.

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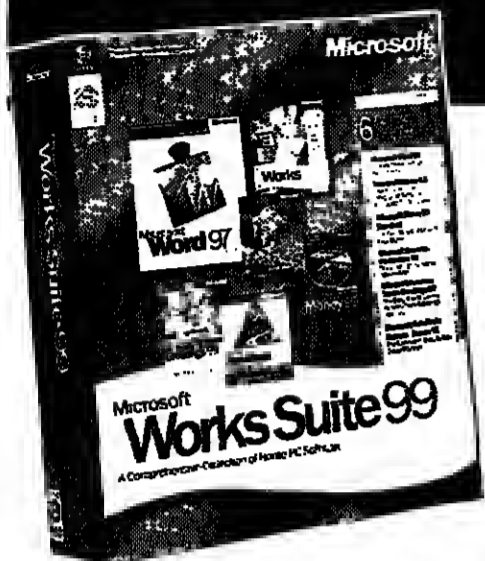


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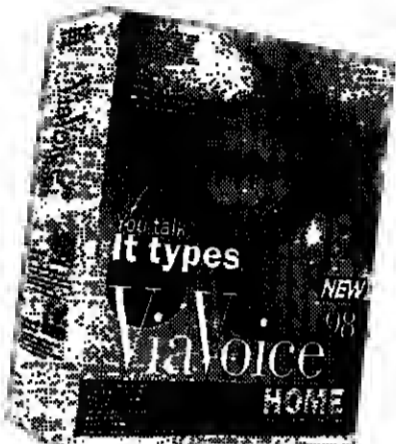
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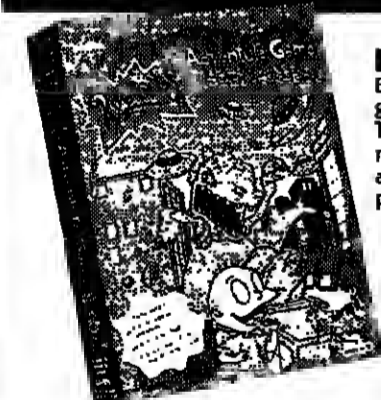
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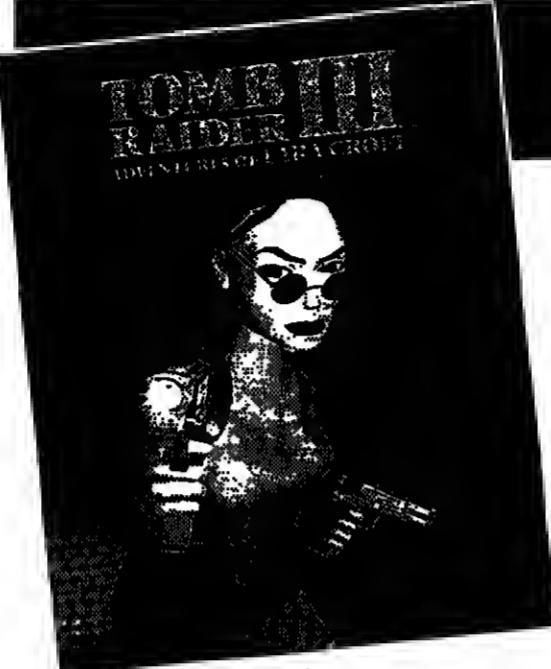
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# 39 radical steps to improving health of poor

A RADICAL, uncosted plan to close the health gap between the rich and poor by eliminating poverty has been put forward by an independent inquiry set up 16 months ago by the Government.

Its 39-step cure for the social ills that mean the poor generally lead unhealthy, shorter lives, relies on a wholesale redistribution of wealth.

Among the recommendations are higher benefits and pensions, free nicotine patches, school meals and fresh fruit, fluoridation, as well as better housing and education. More training, less unemployment and improved public transport are also on the list as is the reform of the common agricultural policy and all are regarded as essential to end the inequalities in health which mean the poor can expect to live five years less than the rich.

The inquiry team, chaired by the former Chief Medical Officer, Sir Donald Acheson, makes no recommendations about how the reforms are to be funded but insists that its entire plan of 39 major recommendations and 35 minor ones must be carried out if it is to stand any chance of success.

"We believe that success will only come if implementation is across the entire board," Sir Donald said. "Cherry picking one or two of the sexy ones like nicotine replacement or fluoridation would make a difference but unless one resources them all one won't achieve much. This report goes right across Whitehall and most of the great departments of state will have to make major policy changes if much is to happen."

Sir Donald said that his team was composed entirely of scientists and did not include an economist so nothing had been costed. "We haven't looked at cost effectiveness," he said. "Affordability is not a matter for scientists but politi-

## Uncosted plans by inquiry team call for massive redistribution of wealth, reports

Ian Murray

cians and we therefore await what the Government is going to do. The principle of equity underlies this report. It is a principle that transcends party politics."

To end inequality all social policies in future should be evaluated in terms of their impact on health and should be drawn up in order to minimise any bias. Action was also needed to reduce income inequalities and improve the living standards of poor households.

Sir Donald said that early indications were that the Government was prepared to follow the recommendations and was in fact already implementing some of them. "The advice we have received is that the inequalities are so great that a sustained effort will be necessary over ten years to achieve anything like what we are hoping for," he said.

Because the health of mothers was so crucial to the health of future generations, the highest possible priority had to be given to improving conditions for them says the report.

The only recommendation about taxation the report makes is for swinging increases in the amount levied on tobacco and it cites international research showing that young people will not start smoking if it is too expensive.

Underlining that Income Support fails to provide an adequate standard of living — even without taking into account the cost of tobacco — the

report said: "Not surprisingly, therefore, low income households where the parents smoke are much more likely to be lacking basic amenities, including food, shoes and coats than non-smoking parents on Income Support."

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, gave a warm welcome to the report, saying: "Poverty is a principal source of ill health. Poor people are ill more often and die sooner."

Anna Coote, director of the public health programme for the King's Fund, the independent healthcare think tank, said the report gave incontrovertible evidence that people paid the price of poverty with their lives. "The real test of the Government's commitment to tackling health inequalities is whether it can now ensure policies and practices are clearly focused, vigorously pursued and effectively co-ordinated," she said.



Future generations will benefit if efforts to close the health gap now are successful

# Well-fed babies grow up to be more intelligent

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

BABIES are more likely to be clever if they are fed well in their first few weeks, according to new research. The first big study of premature babies' feeding patterns found that those not given food with an enriched formula were relatively backward by the time they were seven or eight.

A team led by Alan Lucas, of the Medical Research Council's childhood nutrition centre, at the Institute of Child Health followed what happened to 360 premature babies born in the developed world over a 16-year period.

Professor Lucas, whose findings are published today in the *British Medical Journal*, found evidence that nutrition in early life has an important impact on the development of the brain.

Babies who were given a standard pre-term formula milk, rather than an enriched feed, had reduced verbal IQ scores when they started school. This was particularly evident in boys. Cerebral palsy was also more prevalent in

infants fed standard formula milk. The researchers say that under-nutrition did not seem to cause this condition, but it may prevent the brain compensating for an adverse event that can cause the disorder, such as a period of inadequate oxygen supply.

Premature babies are now normally given an enriched feed, containing extra protein, vitamins and minerals, but this was not the case 16 years ago, when the study began.

Thirty-one per cent of those given the standard formula had a low verbal IQ by the time they were seven or eight, compared with 14 per cent of those given the enriched formula. Among boys, 47 per cent given the standard formula had lower IQs, compared with 13 per cent given the enriched formula.

Professor Lucas said that his group and others around the world were now looking at the effect of nutrition on full-term babies. Data on this would be published over the next four or five years.

# Scientist who is stickler for truth

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE man who led the inquiry into inequalities in health, Sir Donald Acheson, adheres to the rigorous and exhaustive methods of the scientist.

As a scientist, too, he has not liked getting involved in politics, although his appointment as Chief Medical Officer thrust him into the limelight. "I feel I'm putting my reputation on the line in public quite frequently in this job," he remarked. "If my scientific credibility goes, nobody will believe me so I must satisfy myself on the evidence of every issue."

Sir Donald, who retired as Chief Medical Officer in 1991, was somewhat relieved to hear that the inquiry team he had envisaged was too large: it meant he was able to dispense with the economist and produce a report on reducing health inequalities that assumed a world in which financial restraints played no part.

Born in Belfast in 1926 to a GP, Sir Donald became professor of clinical epidemiology and foundation dean of the medical school at Southampton University in 1968. He was made head of the Medical Research Council's environmental epidemiology unit, and his report on the risks posed by asbestos led to a ban on imports and to strict safety standards.

As chairman of a study group on primary care in inner London in 1981 he came up



Acheson: headed team set up by Frank Dobson

with 115 recommendations, including retirement of doctors at 65 and new standards for community nursing. He was the obvious choice as Chief Medical Officer two years later, and quickly became a feared and respected figure in Whitehall. Normally soft-spoken, he proved capable of grilling civil servants ruthlessly to find out the facts.

He persuaded the then Government to double the amount of money available for treating Aids and drew up guidelines for treating patients which remain the gold standard.

His style is to mix science with passion. "The key thing is deciding what you want done. It's essential to get the main issues to the top of the pile and not let the details engulf you." □ *Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health* (Stationery Office; £19.50)

# £5m programme to find Aids vaccine

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

OXFORD scientists are to develop an Aids vaccine in the largest privately funded Aids research programme.

Professor Andrew McMichael, of Oxford University, leads one of the first two projects selected by the International Aids Vaccine Initiative in a £5.7 million programme started in London yesterday.

The Oxford team will collaborate with the University of Nairobi to produce a vaccine effective against the strain of HIV that is endemic in Africa. A second team, Alpha Vax Human Vaccines Inc. of Durham, North Carolina, and the University of Cape Town, which is taking a different

approach, is also receiving backing.

Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International Development, said yesterday that an Aids vaccine was vital to stem the growth of the disease. Despite nearly 20 years of research, only one vaccine is in trials and, even if it proves effective, it will work only in America and Europe, where the death toll is far lower than in Africa.

The aim of the Oxford virus is not to stimulate antibodies against HIV, but to enlist a second anti-viral mechanism, killer T-cells. These are cells that home in on virus-infected cells and kill them.

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# Minister pledges fair deal for leaseholders

Reforms should make it easier for flat owners to buy freeholds and run buildings, writes Rachel Kelly



Armstrong: she plans to curb threats of forfeiture

A COMPREHENSIVE overhaul of the leasehold system in England and Wales was announced yesterday by Hilary Armstrong, the Housing Minister, with a consultation paper proposing a fairer deal for the country's two million leaseholders.

New rights would allow flat owners to take over the management of their blocks without having to persuade a court that the landlord is incompetent, negligent or dishonest. Leasehold groups estimate that there are tens of thousands of disputes over decorating and repair costs each year.

Other reforms would make it easier for flat owners to buy their freehold. In future, those living in blocks of flats above shops would be able to buy the freehold if the flats constitute just 75 per cent of the building, instead of the 90 per cent currently required. At present, only buildings in which there are at least nine storeys of residential property above one of commercial property qualify, but under the new proposals, the far more common buildings which have three or four storeys of residential flats

above a shop would qualify. Ms Armstrong said: "The leasehold system is flawed to its roots and we are committed to reform it. Previous attempts have just been tinkering with the odd element. They have not worked. Abuses still flourish, causing misery and frustration to many leaseholders."

Ms Armstrong said that the Government was committed to finding time within the life of the current parliament to implement the long-awaited reforms, which were a manifesto commitment.

They would also see stricter control of agents employed by landlords to manage property, who can often be custodians of large sums but need no professional qualifications. If agents did not produce satisfactory self-regulatory systems, Ms Armstrong said, the Government would consider setting up a licensing system.

The Government is also to seek ways of curbing the ability of landlords to threaten to take possession of leasehold flats over small breaches of a lease, such as a minor delay in paying ground rent. Such threats of "forfeiture" can re-

owner occupation and to have control over the way in which their homes are managed."

Peter Haler, of the Leasehold Advisory Service, which advises both leaseholders and freeholders, said: "We are delighted that tenants will have the right to manage their flats although we are worried how it will work. There needs to be a very clear set of rules or else tenants will be at each other's throats."

Mr Haler also welcomed the plans to curb the threat of forfeiture, but said that those leaseholders whose landlords were in the public sector had been excluded from the right to manage their blocks.

"Some of the worst problems occur in the public sector," Mr Haler said. "There is an assumption that public sector landlords are good blokes, but many are inefficient and we constantly have cases of leaseholders having problems with their service charges."

Richard Lambert, of the British Property Federation, which represents landlords including the Grosvenor Estate, welcomed the proposals and said that landlords too would benefit from a fairer and less complicated system.

"We wish for the abuses of the bad landlords to be curbed without putting too much of a burden on the reputable landlords," he said.

sult in people handing over large sums to avoid legal action.

Other proposals to make it easier for leaseholders to buy freeholds include relaxing the current residence test. Under existing rules, half of any group of leaseholders seeking to buy their freehold must prove that the property had been their main home for the previous 12 months, but under the proposed reforms they would need only to prove that it had been their main home from the time that they served notice to their landlord that they wished to enfranchise.

Nick Raynsford, the junior housing minister, said: "Our overall objective is to provide leaseholders with the opportunity to reap the full benefits of



Anna Stothard unveiling the Millennium Sculpture

# A millennium sculpture for changing times

By Alan Hamilton

WHEN *The Times* first saw the light of day, the millennium was still 215 years away. We are still here, and yesterday, with only 400 days left, we unveiled our own countdown to the new century.

The *Times* Millennium Sculpture is a dramatic addition to one of the capital's busiest junctions, where Earl's Court Road meets the Cromwell Road on its way to Heathrow airport and the West. It is a celebration both of changing times and of unchanging time.

Six metres high and of polished steel, the sculpture contains two millennium countdown clocks and an electronic display carrying up-to-the-minute headlines from *The Times* website.

Anna Stothard, 15, daughter of the Editor of *The Times*, pulled a cord to reveal the sculpture and to release 400 silver balloons. "I thought it should be unveiled by someone with a longer commitment to the new millennium than a 47-year old editor," her father, Peter Stothard, said. Anna thought the millennium "an opportunity to shed all the worst of the past and find the best of the future".

The sculpture is intended to mirror the evolving newspaper. "The story of the past five

years has been of changing times. That is the message of this newspaper for the new millennium, and the sculpture is a reflection of that," Mr Stothard said.

Cristina Garcia, the Spanish-born architect who designed the sculpture for the 4i group, said that it celebrated the millennium in a way that recognised the history of time, and the importance of the Greenwich Meridian from which all time and distance are measured. A vertical mast representing Longitude 0 bisects two segments of the globe, suggesting the 24 time zones around the world.

Once the countdown clocks reach zero, they will revert to conventional tellers of time, and the sculpture, engineered by the Atelier One company, will remain in place throughout 2000.

Counting down to the millennium can be an inexact science. Another countdown clock in Piccadilly Circus was seen earlier this week to be wrong by four days. There is also the small matter of the entire world celebrating the new century a year too early. But public opinion will not be shaken from its desire to celebrate the round number, and blow the mathematical niceties. Only 399 days to go.

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## Asthma mites found in cereals

By MICHAEL HORNSBY AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

MITES that can trigger asthma and other allergies have been found in a wide range of breakfast cereals and other foods.

Scientists working for the Ministry of Agriculture detected the moist, soft-bodied bugs, less than half a millimetre long, in a fifth of cereal-based products on sale in England and Wales. The 567 samples that were analysed included breakfast cereals, baby food, biscuits, bread, cakes and flour.

Twenty-one per cent of the samples contained mites. The most frequently infested items were flour (28 per cent), bread (25 per cent), biscuits (20 per cent) and cereals (19 per cent).

Ken Wileby, of the Central Science Laboratory at York, who led the research, said: "We do not yet know whether eating these small amounts has any health implications."

## Charlotte's mother in court

MICHELLE Jones, 24, was remanded in custody by Warrington magistrates yesterday accused of abandoning her three-year-old daughter, Charlotte, and causing her grievous bodily harm with intent. Later Charlotte left hospital in the care of social services staff after receiving treatment for mild hypothermia. She was found in woods on Tuesday after a 30-hour disappearance.

## Friend is cleared of balcony killing

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# Judge loses

Friend is cleared of balcony killing

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# Judge in fraud case loses claim for costs

### Court rules that, though not proven guilty, he was not a successful defendant, reports Tim Jones

A JUDGE who escaped a second fraud trial after doctors said the ordeal could drive him to suicide has failed in his unprecedented attempt to have his legal costs refunded.

Judge Richard Gee's application is believed to be the first time a defendant has applied for his costs without having first been shown to be innocent.

Giving her ruling, Mrs Justice Steel said that, although she had kept in mind the presumption that an accused person was innocent until proven guilty, the first trial of Judge Gee had been inconclusive.

Mrs Justice Steel said: "Although Mr Gee must be presumed innocent, he could not be said to be a successful defendant."

It had never been submitted, she said, that the evidence

against the judge had been insufficient to warrant a trial or to support the charges made.

She added: "Although it cannot be said he brought suspicion on himself or misled the prosecution, there was a clear case for him to answer and, but for his ill health, the law would have taken its normal course and there would have been a retrial. The prosecution has not altered its stance on that."

Judge Gee's first trial, which lasted for three months and is estimated to have cost £3 million, ended when a jury, after deliberating for 13 days, failed to reach a verdict.

The judge, who has been receiving his full salary of £87,000 a year since his arrest three years ago, had been hoping to win back more than £70,000 he contributed to



Judge Richard Gee: now negotiating his pension

est rates. The properties were then let out for business use at a profit.

At the time of the alleged fraud, the judge was acting as a solicitor while also sitting as a recorder. He was appointed a full-time judge in 1991.

Last month John Morris, QC, the Attorney-General, caused controversy when, after studying medical evidence, he employed a rarely used procedure to end the case. Judge Gee, who is married to the New York socialite Marilyn Gross and has at least two homes, in London and New York, was not in the Old Bailey yesterday to hear he had lost.

Mrs Justice Steel said that the Attorney-General had considered Judge Gee's health and noted that he had not personally benefited from the alleged fraud. She said it was now clear that the case would not be reopened.

Judge Gee is now believed to be negotiating to gain early retirement with a non-contributory pension fund thought to be in the region of £500,000.



Gary Glitter outside court yesterday after being committed to stand trial

# Glitter to be tried on sex charges

BY A CORRESPONDENT

THE pop star Gary Glitter was committed to stand trial yesterday on a series of child sex and pornography charges.

Glitter, 54, has been charged under his real name, Paul Gadd, of making 50 indecent photographs of children, and with 50 alternative counts of possessing indecent photographs of children. He faces a further four charges of indecent assault involving a young girl, and four other charges alleging serious sexual offences involving a girl. The sex allegations date back as far as 1975.

The "glam rock" star arrived at North Avon Magistrates' Court, at Yate, near Bristol, in a black leather coat over a velvet suit. The stipendiary magistrate, Tim Workman, committed him to stand trial at Bristol Crown Court, where a preliminary hearing will be held on January 18. Reporting restrictions were not lifted and Glitter was released on bail.

# Friend is cleared of balcony killing

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

THE family of a man killed in a fall from a hotel balcony yesterday criticised an attempt to prosecute his best friend over the death.

Jamie Morgan, 22, died in Ibiza last year on the first full day of his Club 18-30 holiday. Despite evidence from other friends of the dead man that the fall was an accident, police believed a claim by another English holidaymaker that he had seen 24-year-old Jason Barrow push him to his death.

Barrow was arrested on suspicion of murder and later charged with manslaughter.

Yesterday at Exeter Crown Court, the judge found Mr Barrow not guilty, having been told that the witness who claimed to have seen him push the dead man had been in a psychiatric hospital since the incident, and was medically unfit to testify.

After the hearing, Mr Morgan's mother, Susan Godfrey, 48, from Barnstaple, Devon, said: "It was a tragic accident. We were more shocked when Jason was charged with pushing him. He is the least likely person to be involved. She added: "We are fairly sure the boys had been drinking quite a lot."

# Gardener died after wasp sting on neck

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A KEEN gardener died after being stung on the neck by a wasp as he cut his lawn, an inquest in Devon was told.

George Duffell, 85, who knew he was allergic to insect stings, had tried to give himself an injection of antiodote but died within minutes with the syringe still in his hand.

Richard van Oppen, the East Devon Coroner, recorded a verdict of accidental death on the pensioner from Tiverton, describing it as a three-million-to-one chance.

After the hearing at Culmpton, Mr Duffell's son, Stephen, said: "He was cutting the grass when he was stung by a wasp. He would have been dead in five minutes. He literally had just enough time to get into the house and push the care home alarm. There was a wasp's nest in the garden and he was partially sighted and probably did not know it was there. We found a wasp on his cardigan."

His father had been stung before some years ago and had nearly died, and had been given an adrenalin syringe to use if he was stung again. Mr Duffell died from asphyxia because the sting caused a sudden swelling in his throat.

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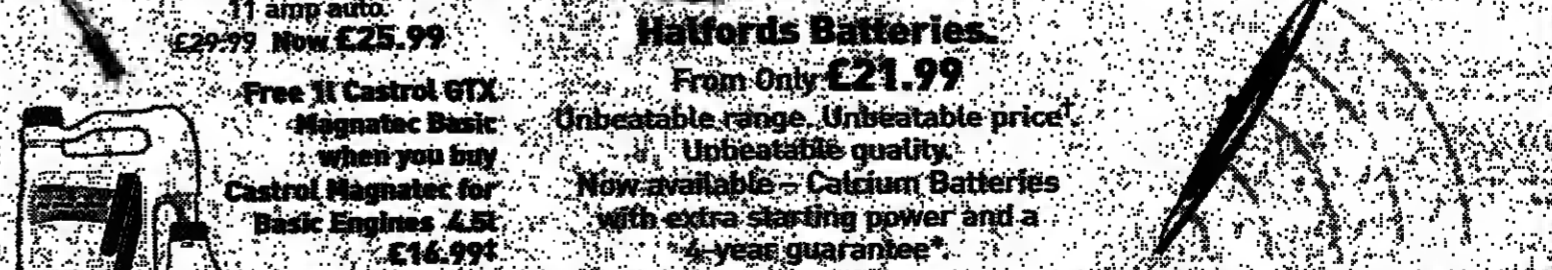
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# Wanted: aide who works faster than a speeding bullet

By Valerie Elliott, Whitehall Editor

TONY BLAIR is about to lose one of his closest aides and is struggling to find a replacement willing to step on to the onerous treadmill of life inside his private office.

John Holmes, 47, the Prime Minister's Principal Private Secretary, may not be a household name but he has become indispensable to Mr Blair. He works so hard — a regular 14 to 17-hour day — ensuring that Downing Street is keeping a firm grip on what Whitehall is doing that some officials believe that his duties should be split between two senior staff.

The work pressures generally in the private office have become so intense that Mr Blair and officials have even discussed a possible restructuring of 10 Downing Street to accommodate more staff.

The hallmark of Mr Blair's administration is his determination to keep check on the rest of Whitehall; his staff have so many responsibilities that many are working at

breaking-point. Critics say this is caused by Mr Blair's "control-freak" instinct.

Word about the intense hours inside No 10 has spread. One official approached for the post turned it down because he did not want to spend so much time away from his young family.

Mr Blair is considering how he can fill the vacuum that will be left by Mr Holmes when he departs at the end of next month to become Ambassador to Portugal. The two men have developed such a close relationship that No 10 insiders describe Mr Holmes as Mr Blair's "security blanket".

For Mr Holmes, who came to No 10 three years ago as John Major's foreign affairs adviser, has been able to merge his key co-ordinating and management role with his pragmatic approach to advice on foreign policy from Europe to Iraq and Ireland.

Jeremy Heywood, a high-flyer in the Treasury who is in his

mid-30s, and who has been acting as Mr Blair's economic and domestic policy secretary, is to take on the main PPS role. He is described by colleagues as a workaholic, but even so some of his administrative duties could go to a new foreign affairs specialist.

Denis Kavanagh of Liverpool University, the co-author with Anthony Seldon of a new book on Downing Street, said: "You really have to be something of a superman to be in Blair's private office." He believes Mr Blair is determined to keep to the style he developed in Opposition — a small, personal staff who can deliver, and officials and political appointees who work as a team.

He also dubs it "the communicating premiership" and likens it to the presidential styles of Clinton and Reagan. Mr Blair likes his own personal media team and is determined the government message is properly communicated even if staff have to rewrite an-



Me and my shadow: John Holmes with Mr Blair in Northern Ireland yesterday

ouncements from all departments. The Foreign Office, however, is determined to replace Mr Holmes with one of its own high-flyers. Among possible names being touted are Nigel Sheinwald, 46, who has strong links with No 10 as head of the Foreign Office news department. He was pro-

moted six months ago to become director of the Europe department and is not expecting another move so soon.

Another possibility is John Sawers, 43, who was private secretary to Malcolm Rifkind, the former Tory Foreign Secretary, and is expected to return to London from Washington.

Matthew Kirk, 39, who headed the EC Presidency unit, could also be in the running for the post. He moved to the European Secretariat at the Cabinet Office in July but could easily shift into Downing Street.

Leading article, page 25

# Dedicated to a life in shadows

By George Bridges

JOHN HOLMES is unknown to all but a handful of political junkies. Quiet and discreet, he has deftly preserved his anonymity as the Prime Minister's Principal Private Secretary, and is only seen when he leaves No 10 behind the Prime Minister to be swept away to the Commons or a foreign summit.

Mr Holmes's job sounds enviable. His office adjoins the Cabinet Room, his in-tray is crammed with confidential documents, and on his desk sits the hotline to the White House. He advises Tony Blair on Iraq, Northern Ireland, interest rates and the colour of the prime ministerial tie while juggling telephone calls to and from world leaders, senior politicians and civil servants. And to his wife, to inform her that he won't be home for supper. The Principal Private Secretary must become a stranger to his family, addicted to coffee and adrenaline, and lose sleep and hair in equal amounts.

Mr Holmes is the last senior civil servant inside No 10. He also served John Major, and his success at making the transition between regimes reflects how indispensable he is, especially on Europe and U-

ster. As the Prime Minister brain on these issues, he is never able to escape the reach of the No 10 switchboard. Whenever the Prime Minister wants his PPS, "Switch" will find him.

Mr Holmes has always worn this leash with good humour. Twice a week, John Major's political staff and private secretaries had lunch in No 10's small dining room before Prime Minister's Questions. The phone would often ring as lunch began, usually with a request for Mr Holmes to answer a Prime Ministerial query. Up he would get, waving goodbye to the only food he would see for 14 hours.

On the rare occasions that he was able to eat more than a mouthful, he never lapsed into indiscretion. Not once did he let slip a piece of gossip about who said what to whom in the margins of a summit, no complaint about long hours, and no criticism of any aspect of government policy.

A consummate civil servant, a cool head under fire and a tireless worker, Mr Holmes is owed a debt of gratitude by two Prime Ministers. *George Bridges was assistant political secretary to John Major from 1994 to 1997.*

# Brown keeps his credit rating as best Chancellor

By Peter Riddell

GORDON BROWN remains the most highly rated Chancellor of the Exchequer for more than 20 years, despite increased public worries about the economic downturn, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

Forty-five per cent of the public are satisfied with the way he is doing his job, with 29 per cent dissatisfied. Although down on his earlier ratings — notably the 56 to 24 per cent balance in his favour after the March Budget — this is the highest rating for any Chancellor since Denis Healey in 1978.

Mr Brown retains favourable ratings among the middle classes, the better-off and those living in the South, suggesting that new Labour's appeal to these groups does not just depend on Tony Blair.

The poll, undertaken last weekend, shows that the increased gloom about the economy has nonetheless started to take the gloss off the Government's economic ratings. But the public remains confident that "in the long term the Government's policies will improve the state of Britain's

economy". Some 46 per cent still agree, with 33 per cent disagreeing. This is down from the post-election peak of 57 to 24 per cent, but is still the best rating since the "Lawson boom" peaked in spring 1983.

Moreover, 50 per cent of the public still think the Government is doing a good job at managing the economy, down from 60 per cent last April. The number thinking it is doing a bad job has risen from just 24 to 29 per cent.

Similarly, there has so far been little change in the number thinking that the Government is doing a good job in handling taxation and public expenditure, at 44 per cent, with 36 per cent disagreeing.

The main shift has been in the public's view of the Government's record in keeping unemployment down, where the number thinking it is doing a good job has dropped from 55 to 43 per cent since April, while the proportion thinking it is doing a bad job is up from 23 to 36 per cent.

MORI interviewed 990 adults between November 20 and 23.

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Peugeot 309	165/70x13	£23 <sup>00</sup>	£21 <sup>00</sup>	£2 <sup>00</sup>
Mazda 323	175/70x13	£25 <sup>00</sup>	£23 <sup>00</sup>	£2 <sup>00</sup>
Toyota Camry	185/70x13	£26 <sup>00</sup>	£24 <sup>00</sup>	£2 <sup>00</sup>
VW Polo	175/70x14	£33 <sup>00</sup>	£28 <sup>00</sup>	£5 <sup>00</sup>
Renault 25	185/70x14	£29 <sup>00</sup>	£26 <sup>00</sup>	£3 <sup>00</sup>

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Fiat Strada	165/65x13	£39 <sup>00</sup>	£37 <sup>00</sup>	£2 <sup>00</sup>
Ford Mondeo	185/65x14	£45 <sup>00</sup>	£39 <sup>00</sup>	£6 <sup>00</sup>
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VW Jetta	145x13	£31 <sup>00</sup>	£27 <sup>00</sup>	£4 <sup>00</sup>
Rover 213	155x13	£34 <sup>00</sup>	£32 <sup>00</sup>	£2 <sup>00</sup>
VW Passat	165x13	£35 <sup>00</sup>	£33 <sup>00</sup>	£2 <sup>00</sup>
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BMW 320i	185/70HR14	£36 <sup>00</sup>	£28 <sup>00</sup>	£8 <sup>00</sup>
Cavalier SRi	195/60HR14	£32 <sup>00</sup>	£29 <sup>00</sup>	£3 <sup>00</sup>
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THE TIMES FRIDAY

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# Devolution 'may break Union' Blair decides to court Wales

## MPs leaked report warns of Scots independence, writes Shirley English

A LABOUR-dominated select committee has given warning that devolution could lead to full independence for Scotland. The leaked report said that the home-rule package was "conceived piecemeal" and "in haste".

In a blow to Tony Blair and Donald Dewar, who have stressed that Scotland and England are "stronger together, weaker apart", the confidential 30-page document said that devolution could lead to serious conflict between Edinburgh and Westminster. It said that it would be hard to prevent the Scottish parliament from holding a referendum on independence, and that the stage would then be set for a "direct clash between what is the English doctrine of the sovereignty of Parliament and the Scottish doctrine of the sovereignty of the people".

Last night, the Scottish Secretary said that the report by the Commons Scottish Affairs Select Committee — which was leaked to a Scottish newspaper — had been selectively quoted "to make a headline". He added that several mem-



Donald Dewar: played down select committee concern of a breakaway and an English nationalist backlash

bers of the committee had said that they did not recognise the media version.

The report highlighted three main areas of potential conflict: Scotland's reliance on Westminster for money; the limited nature of the Holyrood parliament's powers; and the failure to give England similar control over its own affairs. It stated that those strains could "cause the settlement to break down" and that "it is permissible to ask if it would matter, otherwise than sentimentally to some, if the UK were to break up".

Seven of the 11 committee members are Labour MPs, and the report is the first real indication that a number of them are worried that home rule could wreck the Union. The report said that any attempt by the UK Parliament to reduce the Scottish budget would "obviously be very bitterly resented in Scotland and might encourage, or be used to encourage, further movement towards independence".

It added: "The devolution package is intended to be a settlement. The Government pro-

poses that it will satisfy the legitimate demand of Scots (and other minority nations) and preserve the unity of the UK. If it does not do this, if the UK breaks up, it will have failed." Of particular concern is the failure to give England more control over its affairs while granting Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland greater autonomy. This, the report said could lead to an English nationalist backlash which "might be hijacked by ugly forces".

Last night Mr Dewar said: "This is a balanced report drawn up in the context of strong support for devolution, set against a background of a huge vote for devolution for the Scottish parliament."

The Scottish National Party said that it would be interesting to see to what extent the new Labour "control freaks" would try to rewrite the report.

Welsh Office inside Whitehall. The department is to have a stronger voice and is to take a greater role in the cross-government approach towards national issues.

The new Welsh strategy was discussed at meeting this week between Mr Michael and Lord Falconer of Thoroton, QC, Minister for the Cabinet Office.

One Whitehall source likened the Blair U-turn on Wales to the Government's approach to Brussels after the defeat of the Conservative administration. "In the past, officials from the Welsh Office turned up at meetings if they thought they were going to lose out on something. They rarely pitched in on policy."

The new strategy is also being seen as a response by ministers to the narrow vote in favour of devolution by the Welsh people in last year's referendum. Mr Blair now wishes to make clear that the Government has no intention of allowing the Welsh to follow any separatist path and that the Welsh Office should play a full role in delivering the Government's programme.

### cated to a 1 shadows

By George Bridgls

As the Prime Minister's brain on these issues, he is never able to escape the reach of the No 10 switchboard. Whenever the Prime Minister wants his PPS, "Swifty" will find him.

Mr Hume has also been warned this week with good reason. Twice a week, Jim Mather's political staff and private secretaries had lunch in No 10's small dining room before the Prime Minister's departure. The phone would often ring as lunch began, usually with a request for Mr Hume's answer to a Prime Ministerial query. It would go on, and on, until he would see for 14 hours.

On the rare occasions that he was able to eat more than a mouthful, he never forgot to slip a piece of bread into the margins of a common complaint about how he was and no criticism of any aspect of government policy.

Mr Hume's head under the hand of a waitress. Mr Hume's head under the hand of a waitress. Mr Hume's head under the hand of a waitress.

### wn keeps his dit rating as t Chancellor

Do we have the constitution to stand reform?

British politicians instinctively dislike looking at the big picture. It may be our pragmatic, empiricist tradition, as opposed to Continental idealism. For instance, the many strands of constitutional reform are viewed separately, not as a whole.

Yet we will not be able to avoid the big picture for long. That was the theme of a Democratic Audit Charter 88 conference yesterday (sponsored by *The Times* and *Political Quarterly*). Lord Hurd of Westwell highlighted the English question posed by devolution. "As likely as any result of the next general election will be the return of a Labour Government which would this time be dependent on Scottish and Welsh Labour votes. It would not then be tolerable that policy on education, housing, and social matters in England should be decided by the votes of Scots and Welsh members when English MPs had no such rights in Scotland and Wales because these subjects were devolved."

Problems will emerge even earlier. For all the days spent on devolution legislation, there has been almost no discussion about how the procedures of the Commons will have to take account of the start of the Scottish parliament and the Welsh assembly next summer.

The standing of Scottish MPs at Westminster will change and new conventions will have to be created, just as there were for the many fewer Northern Ireland members at Westminster during the 50-year life of Stormont.

There are also legislative consequences. Lord Dahrendorf is a member of the Delegated Powers and Deregulation Committee, which matters given the propensity of successive governments to include provisions in legislation to delegate important powers to ministers.

However, the new Welsh assembly will largely take on the powers currently delegated to the Welsh Secretary. Such delegation is presumably more desirable, but where

## Do we have the constitution to stand reform?

does that leave comparable delegation in England? These are more than just loose ends. They reflect the inherent instability — or if you prefer the dynamic process — created by the Government's constitutional programme.

It is possible to see a reformed second chamber playing a role in relation to devolution and other constitutional issues. Indeed, in other circumstances, a second chamber would have been the right body to put its foot down over the European Elections Bill. Other circumstances would be if the Lords had clearly defined powers and functions in relation to the Commons and a composition with broad legitimacy. Neither applies now.

The Government will be devaluing itself if it believes that removing the hereditaries will be enough to ensure legitimacy. In the Lords, Lord Butler of Brockwell, the former Cabinet Secretary, quoted Gibbon's famous (and soon to be over-familiar) aphorism: "The principles of a free constitution are irrevocably lost when the legislative power is nominated by the executive".



Peter RIDDELL ON POLITICS

Delivering one of the few "big picture" speeches we now hear from ministers on the constitution, Jack Straw said the hereditary peers Bill was "a self-contained measure". Political pressures will, I believe, force more rapid action on longer term reform, despite the less hurried, deliberative timetable of a Royal Commission. Mr Straw pointed to how much the Government is doing, but there is also a need, as Lord Hurd characteristically put it, to know the destination and not simply the name of the first couple of stops on the way.

A key sentence was omitted from yesterday's commentary. So rather than Tony Blair visiting Spain and holding talks last Sunday in London with Bodo Hombach, the German Chancellery Minister, on a shared approach, it was Peter Mandelson, as the Prime Minister's personal emissary around Europe.

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# Tokyo judges reject PoWs' claim for compensation

By ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO AND MICHAEL EVANS



Arthur Titherington near Singapore in 1942

BRITISH veterans who suffered at the hands of the Japanese in prison camps during the Second World War expressed outrage yesterday over the decision by a Tokyo court to reject their claims for compensation. They vowed to continue their fight "for justice".

Arthur Titherington, the 76-year-old chairman of the Japanese Labour Camp Survivors' Association, was so angry that after the judgment had been delivered he spat on the steps of the Japanese parliament building. "There is no justice in this country," he said.

After the two-minute judgment, which dashed the hopes of the PoWs, who are each claiming £13,500 and an apology from the Japanese Government, Mr Titherington said he planned to put more pressure on Tony Blair to help to win redress from Japan.

Martyn Day, the British lawyer advising the seven plaintiffs, described the judgment in the Tokyo district court as a "kick in the teeth". He said he had asked Japanese colleagues to lodge an immediate appeal. However, he was not

confident of victory. "The Japanese judiciary is too much in the pocket of the Government," he said.

At yesterday's ruling, which followed a four-year "campaign for justice" by the PoWs, Judge Shigeki Inoue said: "This court rejects the plaintiffs' claims. There is no need to examine facts related to maltreatment or to rule on them."

Keith Martin, a plaintiff representing British civilian internees, said the decision not to consider the suffering of the PoWs was "a real insult". Mr Titherington was unable to contain his anger. "I expected them to wriggle out on a technicality. But to tell lies, to say that I wasn't beaten for three and a half years..."

The three judges refused to recognise the argument that Article Three of the Hague Convention and other international treaties allowed individual victims to claim compensation. Instead, they found for the defendant, the Japanese Government, which has consistently argued that such claims can only be settled between governments and that the compensation issue

was resolved with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951.

In Britain, Bill Holtham, 78, founder of the Japanese Labour Camp Survivors' Association, said: "If there is a way of taking this further, we will. It's not just the survivors, it's the widows and dependants whose lives have been completely ruined by the Japanese in the war."

Muriel Parham, spokeswoman for the Association of British Civilian Internees, said: "It is disgusting, but I don't see it as a surprise. The Japanese don't want to lose face." Mrs Parham, 62, from Horsham in Sussex, was five years old when she was captured in Manila with her family.

Joan Bulley, 60, also a member of the civilian internees' association, was taken prisoner in Shanghai aged four. She said: "The sheer boldness of the decision just emphasises the cultural differences between them and us."

She added: "It is the inhumanity of it all. I know the Japanese suffered as well, but how can a country live with itself when it knows it

has done these horrific things in the past?"

Britain had 60,000 soldiers and 13,000 civilians held prisoner by the Japanese.

In the Commons yesterday, MPs urged the Government to press Japan for compensation for the PoWs. Margaret Beckett, Leader of the House, said: "I think the whole House sympathises deeply with those who brought the case and the suffering they have endured, and understands their disappointment."

A spokesman for the Japanese Government said it had to respect the court decision and insisted that Japan had already apologised in the statement made by the Japanese Prime Minister in August 1995 when he expressed "deep remorse and heartfelt apology".

Derek Fatchett, Foreign Office Minister, said the Government was "constrained" by Britain's decision more than 40 years ago to accept the compensation agreed under the San Francisco Treaty.

Leading article, page 25



Arthur Titherington shows his anger in the court yesterday

## SAS documentary claims regiment ignored help calls

FROM CATHIE BELL IN WELLINGTON

THE SAS let its men down by ignoring their calls for help, a New Zealander who served with the elite force in the Gulf War said yesterday.

The special forces soldier, known as "Mark the Kiwi" in the bestselling Gulf War book *Bravo Two Zero*, but referred to as Mike Coburn yesterday, spoke out on a current affairs programme screened in New Zealand last night.

The British Government had gone to the highest court in New Zealand — the Court of Appeal — to stop TVNZ from running the interview with Mr Coburn, but the judges rejected the attempt and refused the British Attor-

ney-General leave to appeal for an injunction to the Privy Council, which is still the court of last resort for New Zealand.

Mr Coburn said last night that when on operations SAS soldiers had a device called a "guardner", which meant they could communicate directly with their squadron. "That's a fixed frequency which may or may not work, but it's there and that's what we managed to get through on, saying 'we needed help. Unfortunately, that was ignored'."

Mr Coburn said he felt the hierarchy of the regiment during the Gulf War let a lot of its soldiers down. "They didn't lie to us, but we were misled," he said.

He said it would have been all right if the soldiers had known before they left on operations that calls for help would be ignored: "You can get that mindset in your head and then you make your own contingencies for that. That was certainly never made clear to us before we went out. I was disgusted."

Andy McNab, author of *Bravo Two Zero*, said on the programme that the right decision was made to ignore the calls. Had an aircraft been sent to help, it would have been shot down, he said.



McNab: claims the right decision was made

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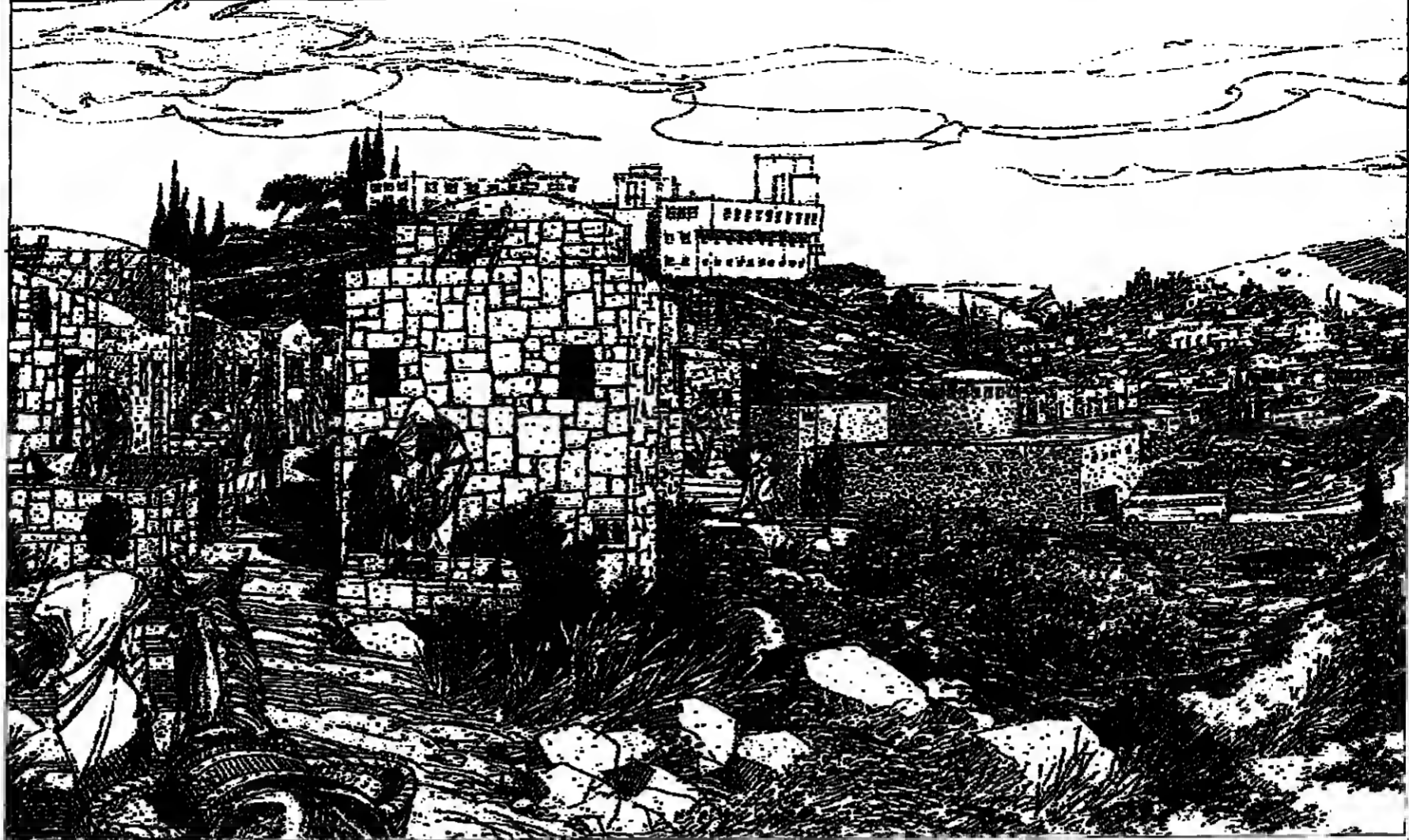






Residents help to clear the 20-acre site ready for construction to start

# Nazareth to become site of biblical 'theme park'



An artist's impression showing how the completed village is expected to look. Modern-day residents of Nazareth will help to turn it into a living historical site

AN AMBITIOUS project has been launched in Nazareth to construct a living village showing how the area would have appeared in the time Jesus Christ lived there. A ground-breaking ceremony was held this week on the 20-acre site and organisers have begun a fundraising drive for the estimated \$60 million (£35 million) needed to complete the work. About 200 volunteers, including Christians of different denominations and Muslims from Nazareth, took part. The Nazareth Village will operate from 2000, but construction will continue for several more years. It is being built using the archaeological remains of stone watchtowers, a terraced farming landscape and a wine press, fitting the images used by Jesus in the Par-

**Archaeologists plan to recreate Jesus's home village, writes Ross Dunn**

able of the Tenants in Mark xiii, 1: "A certain man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it and dug a place for the winevat and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen." Although little is known about Jesus's early years, it is believed that he spent most of his life in Nazareth before starting his missionary work. The Scriptures say Christ was born in Bethlehem, and fled with his family to Egypt to escape King Herod. He then returned to Nazareth in Galilee, where he worked as a builder or carpenter until he was about 30. That

Jesus might have once walked the very land on which the project is being built seems probable, given that during his lifetime there were only 300 villagers in Nazareth and all would have worked together at harvest time. Ross Joseph Voss, the archaeologist at the site, said locals from present-day Nazareth will dress in 1st-century attire and perform tasks such as weaving and farming in the village. "We want this to be a living village, people on the land are actually going to be working, not acting, pruning the olive trees, pruning the vine-

yards, pressing the oil," said Michael Hosteler, the project's director. The staff will also assume the role of storytellers and explain the early life of Jesus. "We want storytellers, who will take on the role of a sandal-maker for example, a farmer, or a homemaker," said Mr Hosteler. Visitors could be given the option of wearing robes (wool in winter and linen in summer) and sandals, and joining in activities such as treading grapes to produce wine. Mr Voss said the aim was to reproduce biblical life. "It was a lit-

tle dirty, a little smelly and a little rough," he said. "People today are insulated from the rural lifestyle and they have really no awareness of what it might have been like." A diverse group of Christians, including Jimmy Carter, the former US President, and Pat Boone, the American entertainer, are helping in the effort to raise funds for the Nazareth Village, which will be run by a non-profit, non-denominational organisation. There are also plans for a study centre, an interactive educational museum and a restaurant.

Modern Nazareth is a predominantly Muslim city of 60,000, jammed with buildings and traffic. Stephen Pfann, director of the Centre for the Study of Early Christianity in Jerusalem, said the village project could boost tourism and provide work and revenue for the local people. "I suppose you could also call it a theme park," he said. "Here you have a piece of property that is nearly contiguous with the original village and it just happens by chance or by miracle that it has not been developed. Everything else is covered with concrete

and dug up and covered over." The restoration work is being conducted under the supervision of Mark Goodman, an Israeli architectural conservationist, who has worked with the Israeli Antiquities Authority. "We take very much care to continue the original technique, the original materials and style, so that it is an authentic restoration," he said. Mr Goodman said the village would have widespread appeal. "It is essentially a Jewish village from biblical times, in a modern Arab town and it is most meaningful for Christians," he said.

included in the price index. "This is not the Jewish state that we all yearned for," the paper said. Jonathan Katz, an economist, said that pork jumped by an unusual 54 per cent last month, "but it can hardly take all the blame in an unusual month when the shekel was devalued by 9 per cent". For many years a few kib-

butzim have specialised in the production of pork in elevated buildings, kept off the ground so that the animals do not touch Jewish soil, and sold under the euphemistic name of "white steak". But since the immigration of a million citizens of the former Soviet Union in recent years, pork selling has become much more open.

## Israel attacks Britain on 'closed' Holocaust files

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL is demanding greater access to international archives on the Holocaust era and has published a controversial "blacklist" of repositories it claims have put obstacles in the way of researchers, including Britain's MI5. The list, which has prompted a denial from British officials and those of other countries, was made public in advance of a 44-nation conference on Hol-

ocaust-era assets which opens in Washington on Monday.

Delegates will discuss looted art, insurance, communal property and the opening of files belonging to firms and public agencies. In a letter released this week, Bobby Brown, adviser on Diaspora affairs to the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, named a dozen archives in Europe and Russia that allegedly "have refused or have been unco-operative in sharing information". Among the state institutions named

are the MI5 intelligence agency and the files of the British Custodian of Enemy Property, as well as the French National Archives, the Vatican archives and the central state archives and Prague Jewish Museum in the Czech Republic.

Mr Brown told the Associated Press news agency that the British Custodian had allowed historians to look at Second World War bank accounts, but not records of safe deposit boxes.

A Home Office spokesman said: "To the best of our knowledge there is nothing on MI5 files that is relevant to the Holocaust." The Israeli letter said: "We appeal to each institution listed to open their files so that we may learn why civilised society failed in its basic commitment to ensure the safety, lives and property of our people."

Philippe Delaval, head of the French National Archives, said he was "astounded" by the accusation, and Jan Dekker, a Czech Interior Ministry spokesman, said: "We have given them everything they wanted."

## Party gets in a stew over pork

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

RELIGIOUS Jews are up in arms because some commentators have blamed pork price rises for last month's 3 per cent rise in inflation (Christopher Walker writes).

Hatzofeh, the National Religious Party paper, said yesterday it was "an odious disgrace" that profane meat was

included in the price index. "This is not the Jewish state that we all yearned for," the paper said.

Jonathan Katz, an economist, said that pork jumped by an unusual 54 per cent last month, "but it can hardly take all the blame in an unusual month when the shekel was devalued by 9 per cent". For many years a few kib-

butzim have specialised in the production of pork in elevated buildings, kept off the ground so that the animals do not touch Jewish soil, and sold under the euphemistic name of "white steak". But since the immigration of a million citizens of the former Soviet Union in recent years, pork selling has become much more open.

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# Schröder calls for big push to unify Europe

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

THE German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, proclaimed his commitment, yesterday, to the creation of a unified Europe that embraces the states of the former Soviet bloc.

The Chancellor's remarks, on his first visit to the European Commission since his election, came after calls this week for a single European state and harmonised taxes from the German Finance and Foreign Ministers.

Setting out his aims for Germany's turn next year in the EU presidency, which starts on January 1, Herr Schröder said that his vision of "an ever-integrating Europe" was the same as that of Helmut Kohl, his predecessor. "This is something that is shared by German politicians, irrespective of party affiliation," he said. He wanted "a unified Europe, one which does not stop at Germany's eastern borders". Bonn was committed to achieving by March an agreement on future EU spending, including a cut in Germany's big net contribution to the EU budget, he said. In a reflection of fading German enthusiasm

for bringing Poland and the other Eastern states rapidly into the EU, he refused to predict a date for their eventual membership. Germany's resistance, with that of Britain and others, to any rise in EU real spending, has brought it into conflict with the southern member states and upset the five Central European Governments that have just begun negotiations for EU entry.

The Chancellor steered clear in Brussels of the federalist



De Silguy: calming British tax fears

themes that have stirred anger this week in Britain and prompted veto threats from the Government. On Monday, Oskar Lafontaine, the Finance Minister, pledged Germany would achieve agreement on harmonising certain taxes by June. German officials are still smarting at the hostile reaction in the British media by the minister's remarks. Later Joschka Fischer, the Foreign Minister, said creating a single European state was "the decisive task of our time".

Yesterday the Commission continued its effort to calm British fears over moves to coordinate EU tax policy. Visiting London, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, Monetary Affairs Commissioner, acknowledged that there was a "growing debate on the need to eliminate tax distortion" in the EU, but that, he said, was limited to aspects of business tax and interest on some non-resident savings accounts. "This does not automatically mean that the UK will be forced to accept levels of tax which apply in other EU countries, because on this matter unanimous votes rule."



Tom Stoppard at the Comédie Française, where he became the first foreign author to see his play performed. Photographs by Peter Nicholls

## Stoppard makes Paris stage history

'Thrilled' British writer sees play performed in language he finds hard to follow, Ben Macintyre reports



Arcadia on stage: 'a masterpiece of love drama'

TOM Stoppard last night became the first foreign playwright to see his work staged at the famous Salle Richelieu in the Comédie Française, but the British writer frankly admitted that he might not have understood every word in the French version of his own play.

Stoppard's play *Arcadia* has made dramatic history in France by becoming the first to be transferred directly from a foreign stage into the repertoire of the Comédie Française, a move made possible by a change in the restrictive laws governing the plays that may be performed in the French national theatre.

"I'm not going to dissemble. I'm thrilled," Stoppard said in an interview before the opening night. "It's a very good cast. My French is not very good. I can read it painstakingly, but when people are talking fast I don't follow everything."

Stoppard worked closely with the translator and adaptor, Jean-Marie Besset, who has the added advantage of being a playwright himself. "He has a foot in both camps, which is not always the case," Stoppard said. "Nothing works exactly in another language and wit is very hard to translate. Obviously one can translate the sense, and as far as I can judge he's done that, but he's also succeeded at the level of style."

The first reviews of the play, while positive, also pointed to the problems of translation. "Tom Stoppard takes us back and forth, incessantly, between today and 1809," *Le Monde* observed. "It is a rich and ambitious play, performed by excellent actors who display almost superhuman memory — Jean-Marie Besset's dialogues do not lend themselves easily to memorisation."

Before 1995, plays by foreign authors could not be performed at the Comédie Française until a time limit had elapsed, and while other British playwrights such as Shakespeare and Sheridan had their work performed there in the 19th century, this was after their deaths.

The restrictions, intended to benefit French playwrights, were lifted when a new statute was passed four years ago allowing new plays by foreign writers to pass directly to the stage at the Comédie Française.

Jean-Pierre Miquel, administrator of the theatre, said that Stoppard's *Arcadia*, a drama about love, politics, manners and a satire on intellectual vanity, was the first play by a foreign author with sufficient merit to be staged at the Salle Richelieu since the new statute was passed. "If Stoppard's *Arcadia*, after the agreement of the governing committee, is the first illustration of

this new possibility, that is because the work justified it," Miquel said.

The opening night was sold out, and tickets are selling fast for future performances, a spokesman said. The theatre, which opened in 1680, is hosting a special performance of *Arcadia* on Monday, to be attended by Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, and Catherine Trautmann, the French Minister of Culture, as well as Stoppard himself.

The play, directed by Philippe Adrien, was first performed at the Vieux-Colombier theatre on the Left Bank earlier this year. Fifteen other plays by Stoppard have been translated into French.

However, while France is now officially welcoming the arrival of long-estranged foreign talent on its most prestigious stage, there may be another reason why *Arcadia* has touched a chord and received such a signal recognition here. In his introduction to the play, Jean-Marie Besset observes pointedly: "Who would have thought that Tom Stoppard, master of verbal pyrotechnics, cerebral joggler of hyper-cultivated paradoxes, would one day give us *Arcadia*, a masterpiece of love drama against a metaphysical background, doubling up as a saloon comedy? Written by a British author of Czech origin, this is, so to speak, an almost French play."

## Rome MP fuels row over Kurd

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

ITALY'S diplomatic crisis with Turkey over the request for political asylum by the Kurdish autonomist leader Abdullah Ocalan deepened yesterday, after it emerged that the PKK leader was accompanied to Rome from Moscow by an Italian communist MP.

Lamberto Dini, the Foreign Minister, sought to defuse wor-

sening tension between Ankara and Rome over the affair by saying that Massimo D'Alema's centre-left Government would not give political asylum to Mr Ocalan, who is wanted by Interpol for a series of murders and is being held in the Rome area under close guard by the police.

However, Silvio Berlusconi, the opposition leader, seized on the disclosure by Ramon Mantovani, a deputy from the

hardline Communist Refoundation party, that he had accompanied Mr Ocalan on an Aeroflot flight from the Russian capital, where the Kurdish Communist Party leader went last month after being expelled from Syria.

Signor Berlusconi said that the affair had been stage-managed by pro-Moscow, anti-Nato elements within the Government and called for Mr Ocalan's expulsion from Italy.

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# Tycoon accused of 'blackmail' threat to Yeltsin

THE former chief bodyguard of Boris Yeltsin yesterday accused Boris Berezovsky, a financial magnate and master of political intrigue, of trying to blackmail the President's family to ensure his own job.

Speaking at a news conference, Aleksandr Korzhakov, who was dismissed as head of the Kremlin security service just before the 1996 presidential elections after more than a decade as Mr Yeltsin's closest confidant, said Mr Berezovsky had threatened to publish details of Yeltsin family finances if attempts were made "to remove him from the scene".

He said the documents covered details about the acquisition of property abroad by Mr Yeltsin's daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko, and the amassing of capital by the family.

According to Mr Korzhakov, both Mrs Dyachenko and Mr Yeltsin's wife, Naina, regard Mr Berezovsky, who holds no official title other than Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as a "nightmare" they would like to forget. "But he has said that, if he is touched, he will publish all

**Ex-bodyguard fires latest shots in feud, writes Robin Lodge in Moscow**

documents relating to the President's family," Mr Korzhakov said.

Mr Berezovsky, the most prominent among the group of oligarchs widely seen as holding the reins of power in Russia, dismissed the allegations. "Korzhakov-Sharkov's delicious stories should be published in full without comment," he said. Sharkov was the main character in the novel by Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Dog's Heart*, in which a dog is transformed into a man with particularly primitive and non-sensical ideas.

There have long been unsubstantiated allegations about the Yeltsin family wealth. According to newspaper reports over the past few years, Mrs Dyachenko is alleged to have bought a castle in Bavaria as well as a villa in southern France.

More recently, a Communist member of the Duma produced documents purporting to show that 26 per cent of shares in the ORT television company, controlled by Mr Berezovsky, had been transferred to Mr Yeltsin. The Kremlin has always denied any financial wrongdoing.

Yesterday's accusations are the latest stage in a long feud between Mr Berezovsky and Mr Korzhakov, as well as other senior figures in the security services. Last week Mr Berezovsky or-

ganised a press conference by a group of Federal Security Service (FSB) officers, who said the agency had issued orders to kill him.

The charges were denied by Vladimir Putin, the FSB director. Mr Yeltsin himself, sidelined once again by his health from political developments, made no comment from his hospital bed, where he is being treated for pneumonia.

Mr Korzhakov also hinted that Mr Berezovsky may have been involved with the murders, in 1995 and last Friday respectively, of the television journalist Vladislav Listyev and the liberal politician Galina Starovoitova, both of which caused a wave of shock and revulsion across the country.

Asked if he thought Mr Berezovsky was behind the murder of Mrs Starovoitova, he said he could not be certain, but that there were similarities with the Listyev murder.



Fischinger, said she was punched by Coolio

## Heat is on for Coolio

Stuttgart: Greeted by 200 fans, Coolio, the American rap star, denied charges of theft and assault in court yesterday, one year after his arrest for allegedly punching a saleswoman.

Police said the singer, who won a Grammy award for best rap solo in 1996 for *Gangsta's Paradise*, left a boutique in a Stuttgart suburb without paying for clothing worth about £580. Coolio, 35, denied punching Nicole Fischinger and said the incident was a misunderstanding.

He faces four years in prison if convicted. (AP)



Coolio, whose real name is Artis Ivey, on his way to the district court in Böblingen, near Stuttgart yesterday

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## Loss of TV soap has viewers in a lather

By Robin Lodge

RUSSIAN resilience is legendary. For years people have put up with unemployment, non-payment of wages and pensions, plummeting living standards and soaring crime. But for a small group of middle-aged women the final straw came this week when state-owned RTR television pulled the plug on the Californian soap opera *Santa Barbara*. Bearing placards, the women mounted a picket outside RTR in Moscow.

Anton Zlatopolsky, RTR's executive director, described the *Santa Barbara* issue as a matter of national security. He said the station was forced to take the programme off the air because of falling advertising revenues after the August financial crisis. An estimated 10.5 million people watch it every evening, making it by far the most popular soap on Russian television. Now RTR has made swinging cutbacks to buy another series and *Santa Barbara* will be back next week.



Berezovsky: one of the oligarchs running Russia

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Out in the cold: "A lot of stories of abandonment are about hoping the child will be given a better life"

# Not just a Grimm fairytale: the abandoned child

**W**hat is it that drives a mother to abandon her children? Earlier this week Tracy Nolan hit the news. On holiday in Istanbul, she fell in love with a Jordanian boutique owner. Her husband obligingly flew home — but had to leave their three children behind. Nolan dealt with the problem by putting her offspring in a taxi to take them to the British Embassy.

Throughout history there have been cases of mothers abandoning their children and this seemingly unnatural act has been reworked in numerous myths and fairytales. Romulus and Remus were raised by a she-wolf after being abandoned beside the Tiber. Snow White is left in the forest on the orders of her stepmother. *Hansel and Gretel* also begins with the children abandoned by their parents.

In the Grimm fairytales, the act of abandonment is seen as at best morally ambivalent (the servant chooses to abandon rather than to kill Snow White but does not actively save her), at worst cruel. But Marina Warner, the author of *From the Blonde to the Beast* and *No Go The Boggymen*, both studies of fairytales and mythology, points out that historically, abandoning children was not always an act of malice. "Famine, not being able to cope with rearing young children, was definitely something people told stories about."

The forces that drive a mother to abandon her children, reworked in numerous myths and fairytales, are as strong as ever, says Grace Bradberry

came to be seen as one of wickedness rather than despair. Yet the motive for most abandonments is judged by experts to be severe depression.

There are exceptions. The philosopher Rousseau, who came to be seen as one of wickedness rather than despair. Yet the motive for most abandonments is judged by experts to be severe depression.

The motive is judged by experts to be severe depression

many fairytales are rewritten in modern editions so that rather than being abandoned, children wander off of their own volition. There is a sense that whatever happens inside the home, what happens outside may well be worse — a fictionalising of our current fear of the badly intentioned stranger.

This is something that the artist Gigi Sudbury has picked up on in her exhibition of her own illustrated fairytales at Leighton House in London. "Rereading the Grimms' fairytales, the same themes are addressed again and again," she says. "They're about stability and staying with what you have."

We now see abandonment, far from offering children a better life, as robbing them of any stability, leaving them rootless and without identity.

It is a more absolute state than being adopted, because an adopted child has the right to know the natural parents' names. Abandoned children who are not identified do not have even that option. They do not know where, when or to whom they were born and have spoken of the shock of seeing their birth certificates with the word "unknown" written in several boxes.

**M**others forced through destitution to abandon their children were often aware of this. Earlier this year there was a heart-rending exhibition of keepsakes bequeathed by mothers who had left their babes at the gates of a founding hospital 200 years ago. A hazelnut, a ragged square of embroidered cloth and a playing card were among the pathetic offerings left by women who dreamt that these would help them one day to identify and reclaim the babies.

One tends to assume that social security, the possibility of abortion, the support structure of healthcare and social workers, would have made such instances a thing of the past. Yet earlier this year official figures showed that the number of abandoned babies had tripled over the past ten years. The fairytales still have resonance.

## Park now for next Christmas

**T**he reason why getting a driving licence is such an emotional staging post for any young person is that when you sit behind a steering wheel and set off down the road for the first time you learn several important things about the wider world that teachers never bothered to tell you at school, such as the fact that there are many adults out there who are even more stupid than you.

The other thing you realise is that most drivers in London aren't going anywhere. They're cruising around trying to find a place to park so that they can finally get out and do their Christmas shopping. I'm referring, of course, to last year's Christmas shopping. They almost found a spot near Regent Street in August, but then they thought they might as well keep driving around in the hope of securing an early parking spot for this year's Christmas shopping.

Occasionally, these drivers, impelled by some primeval survival instinct, will execute their emergency two-step car-parking procedure, which involves:

Step 1. Tailing anyone who is walking down the street jangling a set of car keys in their hand (on the assumption that they will shortly be freeing up a parking space).

Step 2. Being philosophical when they find out that this person is not returning to a parked car (ie. having the sense to appreciate that with so much genuine suffering in the world — including wars and murder — it won't make any measurable difference to the global tally of senseless

violence if they were to step out of their car and kill this person anyway).

One explanation of why bumper cars remain popular even when children grow into adults is that they are the only place where you can drive for hours without having to find a parking spot for yourself: there would be a lucrative future for any company that provided large tattooed men to hop onto your bonnet whenever you wanted to stop, and to steer you through congested traffic to a suitable parking spot the way those attendants do at the end of dodgem rides.

The other reason why bumper cars remain so popular with adults is that they allow you to bring basic faults in their own people's driving skills to their attention in a way that you can rarely do on the open road without losing your no-claims bonus or getting arrested for assault. (You've probably noticed how frequently, when at the wheel, you find yourself shrieking,



**MAN UNDERNEATH**  
**JOE JOSEPH**

"Jeez, that driver is a complete idiot", even though you're not a professional taxi driver. It's as if in your non-driving hours you only ever meet people with doctorates — You: "I would like a one-day travel card, please." Ticket seller: "Certainly, Sir, although why not start walking instead? As long as you took your first step before the train left this station, Zeno's paradox of the tortoise and Achilles shows that you would reach your destination before the train did.")

Americans have been smart enough to find their own solution to this age-old problem: yesterday they all drove

home to celebrate Thanksgiving, established by the Pilgrim Fathers to give thanks for escaping Europe to settle in a country where every man and woman — regardless of race or religion — was able to find a parking space as late as the fourth Thursday of November, the day which traditionally launches the final 20 shopping days before Christmas. One

solution to Europe's parking headache would be to sell cars the way they sell mobile phones. Just as mobile phones come in leather pouches, cars would be sold with their own parking space and user tariffs which determined how many minutes a day you could park in that space, with special rates when using your space to park near family and friends.

Or else there should be some sense of achievement associated with finding a parking space by making it an eligible Olympic sport. Watching drivers compete against the clock to locate the one vacant spot in a 20-storey car park would not only beat curling for excitement, but it would give France a rare chance to win a gold medal — Parisians having long mastered the skill of parking a car in a very tight space while simultaneously breaking the speed limit.

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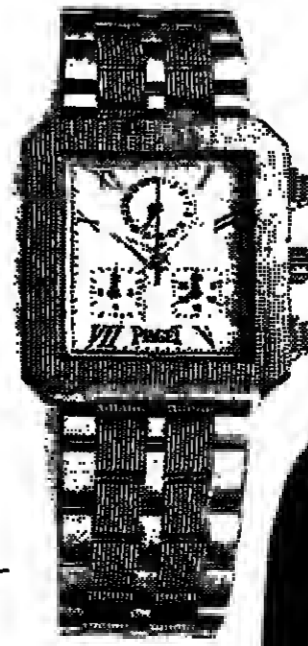
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# The shame of London's schools

## Mary Ann Sieghart on the rise of a new educational apartheid

The Labour MP was depressed and angry. "I sometimes wonder whether I shouldn't just chuck this job in," he said. He is not disillusioned with new Labour and Tony Blair — far from it. He just wants his children to have a proper education.

Having sent them to an excellent state primary school, he is now going through the traumas of finding a place for his oldest child at a decent secondary. At one selective state school, the parents were stung each other up like passengers on the *Titanic*, knowing their children's lives were at stake but that only a few would win a coveted place. One of the comprehensives he was considering was more oversubscribed than Eton. But, because he is a Labour MP, he cannot do what his friends have reluctantly done, and go private.

Standards at state secondary schools in London are shockingly, disgracefully bad. This world-class capital city has third-class education. Most of the MPs' left-wing friends have finally given up, and gone private, unhappy with themselves and furious with successive governments that have failed their children so dismally.

Between us, we reeled off a list of right-on London professionals who had sacrificed their ideology for their children's futures: Professor Ben Pirbright, Channel 4 News's Jon Snow, the *New Statesman's* Francis Beckett, and many more: barristers, bankers, media folk, political advisers. Others had bought expensive houses near to one of the few remaining successful state secondaries:

Today, anyone who can afford it is going private

capitalising their school fees rather than paying for them out of an income stream. And what of the Londoners who do not have that choice? Their children are condemned to low standards, low expectations, poor discipline and poor results.

Over kitchen tables around the capital, the talk always seems to revert to "education, education, education". Among my contemporaries, it replaced "house prices, house prices, house prices" a long time ago. But it is a lot more depressing. I was lucky enough to find a very good state primary for our two children; but in just three years' time we shall be facing the same dilemma as my Labour friend. At least, unlike him, we have the choice of going private, albeit with crippling financial consequences.

But I don't want my children braying. I don't want them to be comparing skiing holidays and BMW models with their classmates. I want for them a broad social mix. Most of all, I have paid my taxes, and I don't see why I should not get a decent standard of education in return.

Talk to education ministers, though, and they dismiss it as "just a London problem". Just a London problem? First, it is also a Birmingham problem, a Manchester problem, and a

Liverpool problem. But anyway, London contains one seventh of England's population and, because of the country's centralisation, a much higher proportion of its wealth-creators, jurists, policy-makers, financiers and opinion-formers. The state of its schools ought to matter.

It also has many of the richest and the poorest people in the land living side by side. Yet they are not educated side by side. Instead, almost anyone who can afford it (and that includes desperately thrifty Asians and blacks) opts out. Instead of the ideal of the comprehensive, where the son of the streetsweeper sits next to the daughter of the duke, there is educational apartheid.

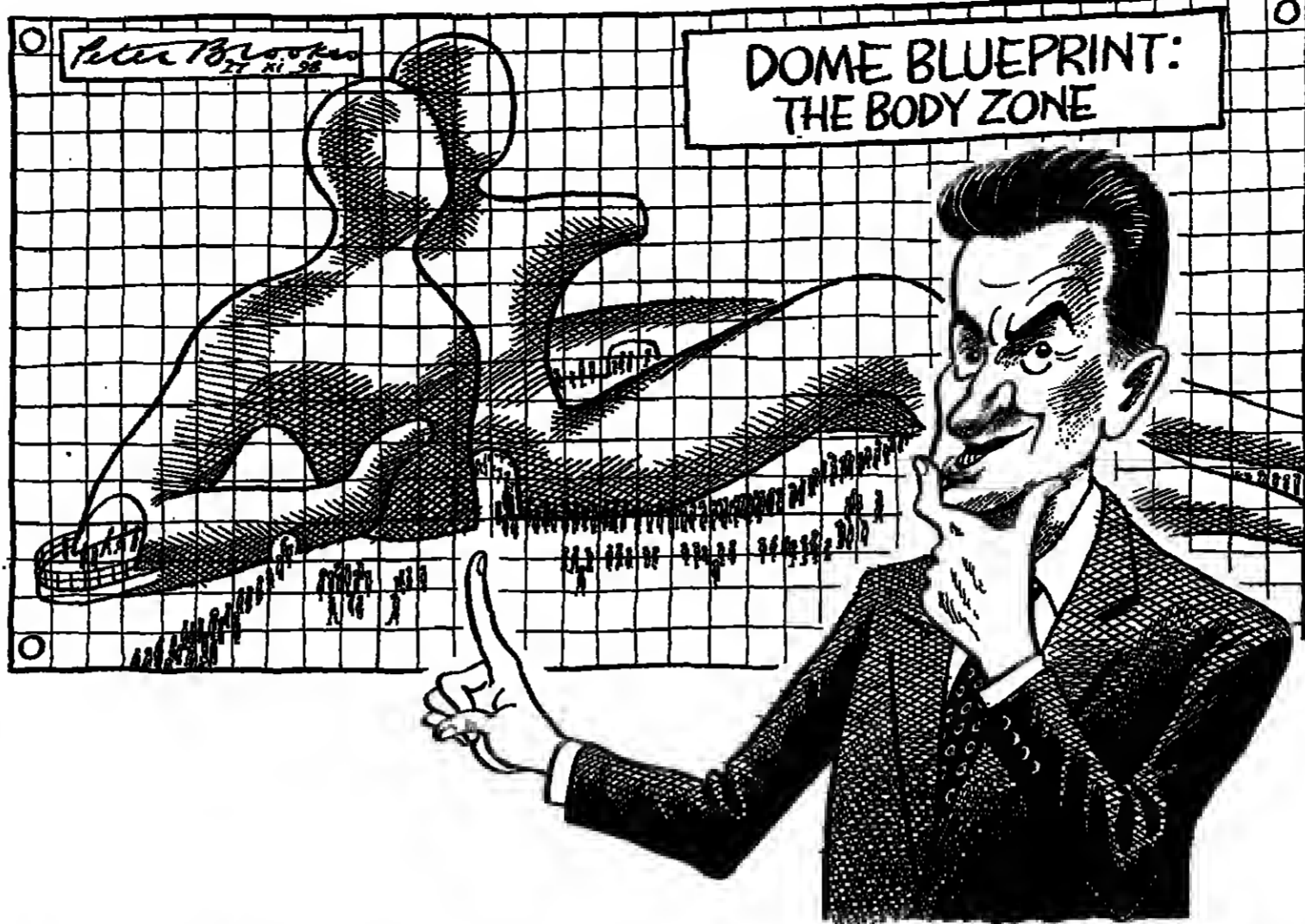
This is the apartheid that we ought to worry about, not the "apartheid" of selection. For it was the grammar and direct grant schools that did ensure that children of all classes were educated together. Even now, the very few selective schools in Outer London attract a wonderfully broad social spread, with lots of ethnic minority parents who understand the importance of excellence in education for their children's life chances.

Indeed, it was Bernie Grant, the black MP for Tottenham and firebrand of the Left, who, to the astonishment of his colleagues, stood up for Harriet Harman at the Parliamentary Labour Party meeting when she was being excoriated for sending her son to a selective state school. He flummoxed against the comprehensives that had given his children such a terrible education. The *bien-pensant* white liberals were silenced.

Another black MP, Paul Boateng, has managed to get away with educating some of his children privately. So, inevitably, has Geoffrey Robinson. But most Labour politicians get into trouble even for patronising grant-maintained state schools which do not select by ability.

And now the few remaining grammar schools, not just in London but around the country, are being threatened with parental ballots. For a Government supposedly committed to excellence, this is outrageous. Children of whatever ability learn best when taught alongside others of similar ability. Private schools have always understood the point of diversity, of "horses for courses". So does the German system, which has infinitely better state schools than ours. And why are French women so well dressed? Because they can afford to be — they don't pay school fees.

If inner London had five or ten "beacon" schools, aimed at the brightest children in the capital, thousands of parents would desert the private sector and come back to state schools. And thousands of clever working-class children would have a chance to fulfil their potential. An end to class divides; opportunity regardless of wealth. What could be more new Labour than that?



"IT'S VERY THIRD WAY- NEITHER ONE THING NOR THE OTHER!"

# A most fitting conclusion

## The transformation of a venerable tailors into a bookshop is yet another example our literary renaissance

Simpson's Piccadilly is to close. The citadel of gentlemen's tailoring is becoming a Jermyn Street boutique. I can hardly believe it. During the school holidays, inspired by *The History of Mr Polly* and £6 a week, I sold tweed jackets at Simpson's at 10 per cent off.

Our department was a model for *Are You Being Served?* Its head was a Mr Creed, who never sat down lest he damage his trouser creases and would not let us do so either. Simpson's was a place of timeless composure. It clothed the Empire. Yet Simpson's is to close. Is the Queen still on the throne?

That is not the half of it. Simpson's entire building is to become a bookshop. It is to be the largest bookshop in the world, a "department bookstore" in Piccadilly, flagship of the new Waterstone's empire. There will be books galore. There will be reading areas, coffee lounges, poetry corners, internet access points. The preserve of camel hair, worsted and cavalry twill is to be seized by Tennyson and Yeats, Shakespeare and O'Neill, Tolstoy and Trollope. Where the Wooster brogues once sought a new pair of spats or a Christmas gift for Jeeves, will now thunder the trainers of the reading classes. The prospect is awful. This dumbering-up of London has gone too far.

Eight minutes' walk from Simpson's is Maggs Bros. Maggs is in a different class. It occupies what must be the oldest completely unaltered house in London, at 50 Berkeley Square. The firm, under Earnest and Uriah Maggs, was founded in 1853 and moved from Conduit Street to Berkeley Square in the 1930s. It has been trading there ever since. The house is like the Bodleian or the London Library, where every pore oozes book, but in Maggs's case the books are old. It is the apothecary of the second-hand bookshop.

Maggs has books in the front room and the back room. There are books on the stairs and books in the attic. There are books in glass cases, in sideboards and cupboards. Open any door and out will spill a dusty volume with a dusty scholar ensnared in its pages. Staff are fluent in Spanish, Latin, Hebrew, whatever. On my last visit, an American student was translating some Italian letters from Pound. Maggs hires its staff for their scholarship not their salesmanship. Nothing at Maggs can equal its

"downstairs". The old Georgian servants' quarters survive intact: pantries, butteries, wine cellars, a game larder with hooks still in place. A passage under the garden leads to the mews, with carriage yard and stables. Here are the cobles and run-offs, the mangers and haylofts, the tiny bedrooms for the ostlers and grooms, still numbered. And every inch is books. Books are stacked, crammed, jumbled and squeezed, even on top of the ancient privies.

obvious talisman than bookshop closure. How strange that now, amid a similar climate of cultural gloom, the bookshop should be surging back to life. There are ten times more full-range bookshops than there were two decades ago. There is a bookshop on every town high street. The collapse of resale price maintenance — an event predicted to destroy traditional bookselling — has done no such thing. There are bookshops in museums, stations and supermarkets. There is even a bookshop in Trafalgar Square. The American firm of Borders is about to open a chain of its celebrated bookshop-cafes, where customers can drink, read and only perhaps buy books. This is a true university of the street, the library privatised yet communalised.

Those who pose as custodians of culture outdo even the farmers in their whingeing. Last week the Oxford University Press announced that it was closing down its modern poetry list as an economy move. This was seized by the arts lobby as another sign of degeneration, echoing that in live theatre, the quality press, academic standards and the Turner Prize: A stanza of poets wrote to *The Times* demanding state subsidy and government action. Yet poetry is doing fine. This week appears that regular bestseller, *Poems on the Underground*, a collection of verses old and new printed in Tube carriages. This happy innovation is now imitated in city trains round the world, in New York, Paris, Dublin, Stuttgart, Barcelona, Athens, Shanghai, Moscow and Stockholm.

Britain's leading poetry publisher, Faber, makes a handsome profit on its poetry list. Ask a bookshop what sells well at Christmas and poetry anthologies come hard on the heels of manuals and biographies. Any home that calls itself civilised will have poetry on its shelf. Oxford may have

trouble managing its list, but that hardly heralds the collapse of culture. As the editors of *Poems on the Underground* point out, the writing of poetry, public reading of poetry and listening to poetry and selling poetry borders on a national obsession. Pubs and arts festivals are stuffed with it. To say poetry is dead is as nonsensical as to say the same of the bookshop. Poetry may be the most private of passions, Wordsworth's "emotion recollected in tranquillity". But the public has learnt that it can nowhere be better recollected than in those silent, solitary moments on the Tube.

I salute Waterstone's-at-Simpson's, as I salute Maggs and *Poems on the Underground*. In the beginning was always the word. The word is now come to market. The word in print, the smearing of ink on paper, has seen off every technology since Caxton, and will see off plenty more. In his novel *The Storyteller* Mario Vargas Llosa wonders why it was that primitive Amazon tribes revealed to anthropologists every aspect of their lives, even their religion, except one.

They kept secret only the doings of the *hablaadores*, their storytellers. Their story was the secret chord on which their identity and thus their survival depended. The storyteller was never still, always listening, walking, talking, always "on his way". He was the word, the private bond of community.

The bookshop is our temple of that word. It stands on its rock, firm against the waves of digital, online, website, disc and screen, as it has stood firm against newspaper, radio and cinema. More books are bought today than ever before. Like the storyteller, the bookshop carries the message. It watches, listens, holds the tribal secrets tight bound on its shelves. Like the storyteller, it refreshes its message with new titles every day. The tribe will always follow.

When Sir Robert Walpole retired from politics to his palace of Houghton, he went to his favourite room, the library. He took down one book after another and tried to read it. Eventually, it is said, he burst into tears. He realised that after an active life, he had lost the art of reading. Thanks to Waterstone's, Maggs and *Poems on the Underground*, I sense that art is stronger today.

## Simon Jenkins

Caesar, J (captain): A controversial selection, not least because of doubts about Caesar's qualifications on the strength of two short overseas tours here in 55 and 54BC. But he talked himself into the job with the help of his fan club, the Legionaries. He would bring speed and generalship to England's midfield. Authoritative, at dealing with the manager's soothsayer. He was famous for his speed about the field. His autobiography, though self-serving, has introduced millions of children to the pleasures of footy. Rumoured to take injury during March.

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With such substitutes, British teams could perform with even more confidence and flair tomorrow. The great dead thinkers are less well paid than our modern sportsmen. They are almost as argumentative, but more articulate. They are not strictly team-players, being almost as self-centred as our millionaire sportsmen. But they make a team that can challenge the world. And they have a bottom of good sense (especially Dr Johnson) which is badly needed in the scrums and the saddles of English sport of pigs managed by donkeys.

OPENING lines, courtesy of the city Nigel Havers. Caprice (above) was modelling lingerie and jewellery for an auction. Havers studied her braids and said: "Caprice. There's one thing everyone wants to know. Are they real?" "You mean the jewellery don't you?" Caprice replied, more cleverly.



third and downgraded its London HQ. Boteach, who sold extracts of his book to *Playboy*, says "Money is extremely tight." Perhaps he should pen *Further Joys of Kosher Sex* to raise some funds.

Going short RABBI SHMULEY BOTEACH'S take on sex is a turn-off. The author of *Kosher Sex* has acknowledged that controversy about his bestselling sex manual has reduced donations to L'Chaim Society, the charity he runs.

The Orthodox rabbi, taking part in the final of *The Times's* "Preacher of the Year" competition, admits his smut has "cost at least £100,000" in donations. Two governors have also thrown in their skull caps in disgust. Because of the loss, the society has cut its budget by one

JASPER GERARD

# Spooked out

DONS at Peterhouse, Cambridge, are so worried by the ghost reputedly haunting its cloisters that they have appointed a new Dean to exorcise him. Ben Quash, who takes up the position next April, is to be asked to perform the ceremony in the college's hall and its adjoining Senior Combination Room, where the old boy has been sighted. Dr Graham Ward, the departing Dean, summoned a diocesan exorcist earlier in the year but failed to quell the nocturnal knockings. "We shall certainly be asking the new Dean to exorcise the ghost," a don at Peterhouse tells me. The ceremony is to be "among his first duties".

The ghost, thought by some to be Francis Dawes, a Peterhouse bursar who hanged himself with a bell rope in 1789 after irregularities over the election of a Master, has been worrying members of staff for several years. The Senior Bursar, Dr Andrew Murrison, and two of the college butlers claim separately to have seen it glide slowly across the oak-panelled 13th-century Combination Room before vanishing. A year ago, it has emerged, an

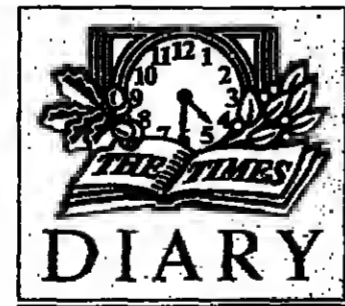
alleged sighting reduced the head butler to a quivering wreck during Formal Hall. Cynics suggest this was a deliberate ploy to end a lengthy after-dinner speech that showed little sign of stopping.

TENDING to Mohamed Al Fayed of a Baltimore hospital has been one of the world's leading cloning experts. I just thought his friends such as Peter Mandelson would be happy to hear this news.

## Charlie's angles

CHARLIE WHELAN has knobbed the peer who was to rule on his shadowy methods in the House of Lords. The Chancellor's garrulous press enforcer faces a kangaroo court hearing in the Lords which will uncover the murky truth behind his Red Lion briefings. Lord Peston, a Labour peer, has been asked to chair and decide whether Whelan should be extradited from the Treasury.

Fate, and mischievous seating at the *Spectator* lunch, brought Whelan next to his nemesis. The convivial lunch concluded. Whelan



emerged victorious: "We had a nice chat and Peston agrees there is no case to answer. This investigation isn't going to happen." We'll see.

HER conversion to Judaism has brought material as well as amatorial fruits for Santa Sebag Montefiore. Chanukah is the first Jewish celebration to be encountered by the newly-wed Santa and she can hardly wait. "The great thing," Santa tells me, "is that it lasts eight days, on each of which you get presents." Sooo she will be able to write a learned work: *Theology for an It Girl, perhaps*.

## Don't tell Cliff

COVER your ears, Sir Cliff. Una Stubbs, the charming actress who nearly lured the housewives' favourite from a life of celibacy, has

given birth to a ghetto-style wannabe hip-hop star. Joe Stybbis (the one in the middle), the 25-year-old progeny of the slick-heeled actress, is enjoying his first hit single with a "rap posse" entitled *Freestyliners*. His lively tunes have charmed youngsters by employing a street argot commonly associated with natives of New York's Bronx district. "Joe doesn't swear at home," says Una. "He has never been a very aggressive boy."

WILLIAM HAGUE has swallowed his pride and is making secret overtures to Paddy Ashdown. Although dismissive of Tony Blair's attempts to cosy up to the Liberal Democrats, Hague has sent a Shadow Cabinet emissary to



explore areas of mutual interest with Paddy's people. Gary Strever, the Shadow International Development spokesman, held a secret meeting with Nick Harvey, Ashdown's head of campaigns, to discuss tactics over the single currency. "Gary wanted to know whether Lib Dem Eurosceptics would be allowed to join with the Tories in campaigning against the single currency. Nick is very sceptical himself, so he was sympathetic," says a matchmaker. Denis Meehan, Labour's Euro tactician, is incredulous: "If the Tories need to travel Paddy's mob for anti-European support, they really are in trouble."

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### Philip Howard

#### ■ If only England could play with more brains...

British sportsmen are the terrors of the world for their success, skill and modesty. Before this heavy sporting weekend they are lucky to be supported by the back-up of a reserve squad of dead intellectuals who were nearly as good at their sports as they are.

Ayer, A.J.: This aggressive all-rounder would stiffen our middle-order batting at Perth. Ayer is famous for his cavalier treatment of short-pitched bowling, pulling it for six as unerringly and therefore literally as senseless as a no-ball. Like Hobbs (Jack, not *Leviathan*), he divides all bowling into two classes: those which concern danger to the wicket (analytic), and those which threaten danger to the person (synthetic). He treats both with unfalsifiable technique. Ayer would also be useful at sledging the Australians with his ice-cold invective.

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سكنا من الاصل





### A DEBT UNPAID

Japan's refusal to offer China a written apology is inexcusable

President Jiang Zemin's visit to Japan is the first by a Chinese head of state since the Second World War. His ceremonial gift to Emperor Akihito of a pair of crested ibises, all but extinct in Japan, elegantly symbolised China's intention to make this historic, meticulously prepared, event a new beginning in the difficult relationship between Asia's two pre-eminent powers. New beginnings are a cliché of diplomacy; but in this case, the horrors of war invest it with real meaning. China's overture has been ill-rewarded by Japan's Government, which has gratuitously angered and offended all Chinese by its stubborn and foolish refusal to include in the written joint communiqué the simple word, sorry. All that Japan summoned the courage and decency to offer was an oral reminder by its Prime Minister, Keizo Obuchi, that in 1995 the then Prime Minister, Tomiichi Murayama, offered a "heartfelt apology" to all Asians on the 50th anniversary of Japan's defeat. Since it is well known that Mr Murayama was attacked at the time for saying even that much, Japan would do better not to keep referring back, as it does to all aggrieved nations, to that statement. As for the written document to be signed by both Governments, Japan insisted that it could contain no word stronger than "deep regret". China, understandably, therefore refused to sign it. Tokyo claims that it has already apologised and cannot forever continue to rake over old evils. But if this is true — and China maintains that Japan's veiled language has never been explicit — why the taboo on committing the apology unequivocally to paper? The inescapable impression created is that Japan is incapable of outright apology to China, because the Japanese still feel no real guilt about atrocities committed against the Chinese by its Imperial Army. Since face is as important in Japan as it is in China, Tokyo cannot be unaware of the

domestic embarrassment this causes to President Jiang, who has shown some political courage in attempting to put the relationship on a constructive new footing. Yet Japanese officials have compounded the Government's error by saying that Japan does not owe China the same degree of contrition as it does to South Korea, where Mr Obuchi last month signed a written statement expressing Japan's "deep remorse" and "heartfelt apology" for the past. That, they say, is because Japan actually colonised the Korean peninsula. But this is mere sophistry. Japan may not formally have colonised China, but it indubitably and illegally occupied it from 1931, when it invaded Manchuria, to 1945. China paid with the lives of up to 20 million citizens. By no means all were killed in fighting. Many died in concentration camps or forced labour gangs; some were the victims of medical experiments as appalling as any conducted by the Nazis. And the Nanjing Massacre of 1937 ranks with the most terrible war crimes in history. What Japan, when it is spoken of at all, still refers to as an "incident", cannot be ascribed to military indiscipline, Mass killings, looting and the rape, including mass rape, of 20,000 girls and women, continued for six weeks after Japan's armies poured through the eastern gate. A third of Nanjing was put to the torch. The evidence points to a deliberate decision to terrorise China into submission. Mr Jiang's impeccable response to Japan's blunder has been to promise to "develop friendly relations" with the Japanese people, who were also victims of the militarist wartime leadership. But, he pointedly remarked, it is up to the Japanese Government to "contain the denial and distortion of history". It is advice that Tokyo should take — and not just because these were statesmanlike words but because they speak the truth.

### GENTLEMEN AND PLAYERS

The Downing Street staff will and should expand

Some cogs in the machinery of government are bigger than others. The forthcoming departure of John Holmes as Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister will leave an especially large hole at the centre of Downing Street. Mr Holmes's duties included foreign policy, Northern Ireland, international crises such as those concerning Iraq and Kosovo, as well as No 10's relations with Buckingham Palace and the Opposition. It is hardly surprising that Tony Blair is finding him a hard man to replace and has considered splitting his post between two civil servants. The Prime Minister has faced considerable criticism for expanding the size of his personal office during his period in power. The charge of "presidentialism" has been raised against him much as it was for Margaret Thatcher. If the departure of Mr Holmes were to result in even the slightest further advance in the numbers around Mr Blair then such gibes will be repeated. Yet the sheer range of activities that the Principal Private Secretary is expected to cover, and the hours that are involved in the enterprise, would not suggest that Downing Street is awash with officials. The character of government, not partisan or personal conspiracy, has placed an extraordinary strain on the modern Prime Minister's office. In a touching reminder of the enduring power of Parkinson's Law, the advent of modern technology — from e-mail to the Internet — has served only to enhance an already intensive workload. The European Union now produces paperwork, often of a controversial nature, that would have been unimaginable a decade ago. The needs of the media mean that civil servants are expected to provide information at ever-increasing speed.

All these demands involve questions of political sensitivity. For all the oft-made accusations to the contrary, Whitehall norms demand that many of these matters are dealt with only by a limited number of appointees within Downing Street. A small number of seconded civil servants, such as Mr Holmes, operate at the centre of this complex. Even after Mr Blair's efforts to enhance his entourage, he is surrounded by far fewer figures than most of his European or American counterparts. The office is also uniquely personal. It relies on a close and informal relationship between the Prime Minister and those around him. It is also shaped by the personality and philosophy of the politician who serves as Prime Minister. Mrs Thatcher and now Mr Blair have seen themselves as policy initiators. Others such as John Major, in the early part of his tenure, chose something closer to a co-ordinating role. The numbers and nature of those at the centre is fluid. It ebbs and flows with the political position of the Prime Minister of the moment. Mr Blair remains in far more danger of possessing too few, not too many, institutional resources. The business of his Government rests on the efforts of a small number of people. It would not be in Mr Blair's interest to acquire a full-scale Prime Minister's Department. The advantages in manpower would be outweighed by the extra unwanted problems of administrative management. He is, however, entitled to seek further expansion of his staff. The Conservatives may find it convenient to chase modest political advantage from this development: a future Tory Prime Minister is unlikely to decide to reverse the direction that Mr Blair has taken.

### FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

Help The Times to fill the empty library shelves

Oliver Goldsmith thought the pleasure of reading an excellent book was like gaining "a new friend". Sadly, some children never make such friends. Traditionalists blame this on the irresistible distractions of television and computer games, whose fast-moving addictive images leave little to the imagination and require scant effort to understand. In today's school playgrounds, where to be "cool" a child must have the latest, newest gimmick, it is a struggle to convince pupils that reading a book can provide as much entertainment as watching a cartoon. Persuasive though this argument may sound, it ignores a salient fact. For even if children want to read, many schools have too few books to lend them. Every pupil in secondary education needs an average of 15 secondary education books to cover the national curriculum properly. Yet, according to the Library Association, the national average of books per pupil is only nine. Sharing books between children is now commonplace. The Free Books for Schools scheme, to be launched next year by News International and Walkers Snack Foods, aims to help schools to replenish their libraries with millions of novels, atlases, picture lists, including books and braille titles. From books, audio and braille titles. C.S. Shakespeare to Sherlock Holmes, will be Lewis to Aldous Huxley, children will be a chance to heed Henry Thoreau's advice:

"Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all." No government or local authority will ever be able to satisfy every school's demand for new tomes. Every academic year boasts at least one Milesworth who manages to blot, lose or partially destroy his or her books. Budgets are increasingly stretched as head teachers try to equip their schools with computers. Although children need to be trained for the rigours of the high-tech workplace, books are still the most effective laptop educational aid any pupil can have. In the coming months The Times will be asking its readers to take their part in a campaign in which, at no extra cost, they can put more books into more schools. A book does not need to be plugged into a mains socket, has no keyboard to master or mouse to control. Pop it into a pocket or dump it in a rucksack, drop it off a desk or throw it across a classroom, a book provides a durable and accessible way of teaching a child how to read. And if a child cannot read, a computer is reduced to a redundant piece of plastic. Books remain the best way of passing knowledge between the generations, sparking children's creativity, kindling their imagination and provoking curiosity. Encouraging pupils to read is an investment in the future and, more crucially, the most valuable gift children can be given.

### Home Secretary's dilemma on Pinochet extradition

From the Vice-Chairman of the British/Chilean Chamber of Commerce

Sir, It is with astonishment and disbelief that I have seen Groux Briain embroiled in the arrest of General Pinochet at the request of a politically motivated Spanish judge. The military takeover of the Government of Chile in September 1973 was supported at the time by most of the citizens of Chile and by all the Nato countries. The situation at that time constituted a civil war. I cannot see how unleashing a one-sided international campaign of "justice" can solve or redeem crimes committed at the height of the Cold War in a far away country a generation ago. That's a matter for the Chileans. Britain became a great nation by being pragmatic in its relationships with its trading partners. The Government does not have a mandate to play Robin Hood to the world. Its function is to further British interests, not to subordinate them to third-party causes.

Yours faithfully, M. J. HARCOCMBE, Vice-Chairman, British/Chilean Chamber of Commerce, Avenida Suecia 155, Providencia, Santiago, November 25.

From Professor Guy S. Goodwin-Gill

Sir, The Home Secretary may wish to be spared the ultimate decision, and may regret the discretion left to him, whether to implement the extradition order.

Would this not be the moment to put the question to the House of Commons on a free vote, both to see the extent to which our elected representatives are sensitive to the issues of law and justice, and also to confirm, one

way or another, the measure of our national responsibility?

Yours etc, GUY S. GOODWIN-GILL (Professor of International Refugee Law), Wolfson College, Oxford OX2 6UD, guy.goodwin-gill@wolfson.ox.ac.uk November 26.

From Mr Anthony Quick

Sir, The conduct of our senior courts of law over the Pinochet case has been a picture of confusion: five senior judges have ruled that he has immunity, three that he has not. If the judges do not know what the law is, this vacuum can only be filled by Parliament passing a statute. Otherwise we will be faced by the situation, common in the U.S., where the law depends on the personal predilections of members of the Supreme Court. In Britain it will be worse, as only five law lords are required for a decision, thus giving their selector great powers of manipulation. There is an overwhelming case that on sensitive political issues like abortion, capital punishment and extradition the law should be made by Parliament and not by a chance collection of lawyers.

Yours, ANTHONY QUICK, Corbin, Scorton, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 0HU, November 26.

From Mr Sergio Lopez-Pugh

Sir, Pinochet led a government that was hard on his enemies, but it turned Chile into a country where you can be proud of being a citizen. All Chileans felt the burden, and we lived with it for 17 years. Then we had a vote on whether he would continue, and he

stepped down, according to the constitution we had voted and approved. We elected a democratic government. Then we elected another.

It is up to us, the Chileans, to determine how best to do justice for the awful things that happened here. We have our laws, and we were going through a process of reconciliation and strengthening of our democracy. The wound was healing. Now Judge Baltazar Garzon has managed to open it wide again. Isn't life funny? The Spaniards had to live with Franco for 40 years. We had Pinochet for only 17, and they come to tell us how to conduct our business?

It is about time Europeans understood that for 170 years we have stopped being a colony. Yours etc, SERGIO LOPEZ-PUGH, Av. El Bosque Norte 0226/602, Santiago, sergio@bigfoot.com November 26.

From Mr John Lidstone

Sir, The conduct of General Pinochet's guilt or innocence for crimes committed whilst he was Chile's head of state has been so compromised by politicians prejudging his guilt and making their verdicts public that he could not be arraigned before a British court.

Consequently a British judge would have to rule that it would be almost impossible to empanel an impartial jury to ensure that he had a fair trial. Presumably the Spanish judiciary would face the same dilemma.

Yours faithfully, JOHN LIDSTONE, East Lodge, Fleet, Hampshire GU13 5SN, November 26.

From Mr Alan Brownjohn

Sir, Does the finance department of the OUP read the newspapers, or take in the broadcasting media? That such a decision should be made just after the successful celebration of a third National Poetry Day, and amidst the wide and lively interest in poets and poetry in relation to the laureateship, is almost impossible to credit.

OUP cites low sales figures for poetry. Other companies in the recent past have adopted a bottom-line tactic, when poetry is understandably less profitable than, say, cookery or gardening, of giving only minimal time, money and energy to promoting poets. Not surprisingly, sales decline, and encourage the accountants' view that poetry can't be worth promoting. The success of creative writing classes and courses of the kind so generously furthered by our late and illustrious Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes, suggests that there may be a greater number of people seeking and learning to write verse than at any previous time. This is also the Year of Reading. Should not all this suggest challenge and opportunity to publishers instead of cutbacks?

But perhaps this latest reverse, happening when it does, can be turned to advantage. The next Poet Laureate could be chosen, from among persons of suitable talent, on the basis that poets and poetry need someone to speak out for them and act as a defender of the art.

Yours faithfully, ALAN BROWNJOHN (Chairman, The Poetry Society, 1982-88), 2 Belsize Park, NW3 4ET, November 22.

### Plum wrong

From Mr D. Lessman

Sir, Apologies are due from the P. G. Wodehouse Society for their denial that Bertie Wooster ever wore a monocle (Diary, November 24).

Not "in the text" eh? Then why did Bertie wear a monocle when his portrait was painted by Gwladys Penbury in *The Spot of Art*? The painting wound up as an advertising poster for Slingsby's Superb Soups in London and the Bouillon Supreme in Paris, so clearly full disclosure was made to the public back in the 1930s.

Yours etc, D. LESSMAN, 67 Hamilton Terrace, NWS 9QX, November 25.

From Mr Ben Stroude

Sir, Bertie Wooster probably wore a monocle for the duration of one (sadly, unwritten) short story before Jeeves very properly put a stop to it. But he was never, ever, known as Plum. This was the nickname of Wodehouse himself.

In 1881 I was christened Pelham Grenville — and not a thing to show for it except a small silver mug. I remember protesting at the time vigorously, but it did no good, the clergyman stuck to his point (*Performing Arts*, 1953).

Yours sincerely, BEN STROUDE, 14 China Farm Lane, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside L48 9XW, bstroude@aol.com November 25.

Business letters, page 33

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046, e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

### European elections

From Dr Nick Palmer, MP for Bratwote (Labour)

Sir, Sir Norman Fowler, MP, claims (letter, November 24; see also letters, November 17, 18, 20 and 21) that most Labour backbenchers are secretly opposed to the closed-list proposals for elections to the European Parliament. As a backbencher who was not able to speak in the debate, but who has experienced open lists in practice while campaigning with social democratic parties on the Continent, may I point out their fundamental flaw?

To succeed in an open-list system, a candidate must not only help his party do well, but also do better than other candidates from his own party. This forces all candidates to conduct expensive personal media campaigns. Wealthy candidates start with a massive advantage, and the principle of fair access to democracy which the party system seeks to promote is undermined. Anyone on a low income would be doomed from the start, unless they could find wealthy backers. For the Lords to insist five times on this system in the name of democracy is, frankly, bizarre. Well-meaning but politically naïve peers have been manipulated by a cynical Opposition.

Yours faithfully, NICK PALMER, House of Commons, November 24.

From Mr Douglas W. A. Blye

Sir, Baroness Jay of Paddington claims that the Lords are applying to the closed-list proposals principles different from those in the Bill for a Scottish parliament.

In Scotland the majority (73) of MSPs will be elected from constituencies and the rest (56) selected from party lists; but under the Government's European proposals all UK members will be selected from party lists. She is not, therefore, comparing like with like.

Here is, in this regard at least, the kind of disingenuous statement which has become the hallmark of the Government.

Yours faithfully, DOUGLAS W. A. BLYE, Middlefield, The Street, Goodnestone, Canterbury CT3 1PG.

### Bailiffs and bills

From Mr V. R. Drinkall

Sir, If Michael Meacher had ever attempted to secure money using a county court bailiff for enforcement I am sure he would not have concluded that it is wrong for water companies to continue to disconnect for non-payment of bills (report, November 19).

As a practising solicitor I can think of no instance in the last five years when a bailiff alone has managed to recover either money or goods. I have even sent bailiffs to corner shops and received the response: "Insufficient goods to cover cost of removal." Most of these could not be rescued. University research that I have seen shows that after county court proceedings in the small claims courts only a minority of defendants paid up on time. After six months many had still not paid. If the water industry is to rely on bailiffs it may as well write off those debts now.

Yours sincerely, V. R. DRINKALL, Ratcliffe & Bibby (solicitors), 69-71 Church Street, Lancaster LA1 1ET, November 20.

### Publishing poetry

From Mr Anselm Kuhn

Sir, Protests at the decision of the Oxford University Press to discontinue its poetry list (letters, November 25) are nothing more than another stanza in a long tradition.

Composers, painters, unpublished writers have ever advanced arguments, ranging from moral duty through to the suggestion that their works might indeed bring profit to the impresario, gallery owner or publisher with the courage to back them. And, in a few cases, history has proved them right.

Professor Fenton might rail (article, November 25), but the fact is that — typesetting and printing costs apart — a slim volume costs as much to produce as a fat one. The management and promotional overheads are identical. It seems that we either accept the view that OUP management have got it all wrong, or it is simply that poets expect their work to be published on a subsidised basis. I doubt that a respected and successful publisher such as OUP will be easily moved by either argument.

At least they seem to have spared their poets the ultimate insult: a publisher can offer — requiring the authors to pay the publishers.

What about the Internet?

Yours faithfully, ANSELM T. KUHN (Director), Finishing Publications Ltd, PO Box 70, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 4DF, finishing@compuserve.com November 25.

### New depths

From Mr Denis Franzini

Sir, Mrs Alexandra Campbell (letter, November 24) adds organisations that "get into bed with" each other to the list of irritatingly silly expressions.

If two (or more) organisations "get into bed together" following a "sexy" deal and have a relationship "to die for" (letter, November 19), might they then be "touching base" with each other?

Yours faithfully, DENIS FRANZINI, 10 Courtfield Mews, SW5 0NH, November 24.

From Sir Bryan Thwaites

Sir, All these ridiculous modern phrases should be put on the back burner.

Yours faithfully, BRYAN THWAITES, Milnthorpe, Winchester SO22 4NF, November 24.

### Seasonal drop?

From Mr John Rook

Sir, I understand that Marks & Spencer is at present experiencing difficulties (reports, November 19 and 26).

Could this be regarded as condign retribution for yet again starting the Christmas selling campaign in early November, and yet again obstinately refusing to insert an apostrophe in "Seasons Greetings"?

Yours sincerely, JOHN ROOK, 42 Peartree Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 3OE, November 26.

### National Trust accountability

From Mrs Clare McLaren-Throckmorton

Sir, As the National Trust donor-tenant of this house on a 30-year lease, and also as an Exmoor-estate owner, I found myself obliged to propose a resolution on rural issues at the trust's recent AGM (letters, November 12 and 17).

I suggested that the trust should redefine its rural, commercial and management policies, concerning which I regard it as non-accountable, insufficiently transparent and frequently inconsistent; it also fails to consult the tenants and neighbours most closely affected by its rural policies, as Roger Scruton states in his article of November 23. "Don't betray our Trust to the townies". At the last minute the trust rejected my request for an independent think-tank but agreed to establish an internal committee to report on these issues.

My view is that an external independent committee is essential, as such a large monopoly charity is neither subject to an outside regulator nor to the National Audit Office. The Charities Commission is not a substitute for either body.

Neither farmer nor donor-family tenants are allowed to stand for the council of the National Trust, thereby depriving it of the benefit of receiving the true views of the countryside at first hand and in confidence.

Yours sincerely, CLARE MCLAREN-THROCKMORTON, Coughton Court, Alostier, Warwickshire B49 5AA, November 24.

### Change in countryside

From the President of the Country Landowners Association

Sir, I suggest that some of Roger Scruton's remarks (November 23) on the demise of the countryside need to be founded on firmer ground. Restructuring of farms into bigger units results from economic need: farms, after all, are businesses — a simple fact that some would seek to forget.

There is a case to be made that some common agricultural policies have encouraged some intensification of farming, with impact on landscape and wildlife habitat. But, overall, landowners and farmers regard their countryside stewardship responsibilities as core requirements of land management. The British countryside is not in terminal decay, as Scruton implies; it remains a treasured asset.

And who are these absentee investors? In England and Wales, 70 per cent of all rural land is farmed by landowner/occupiers; what remains is largely farmed under tenancy agreements with local owners.

Farming and the land-use of our countryside is on the brink of radical change as CAP reform evolves. The challenge now is to manage this period of change with sustainable policies for our agriculture, the environment and, above all, for our rural communities.

These policies are the best way to end the false conflict between town and country.

Yours faithfully, IAN MACNICOLL, President, Country Landowners Association, 16 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PQ, November 25.

### Play on words

From Professor Paul J. Korshin

Sir, I was delighted to read (article, "Expletives not deleted", November 21) that we can trace certain offensive usage to that clever rascal Shakespeare, who "had Hamlet slyly referring to country manors". May I propose a bold amendment? Why not try assigning these words to Ophelia (as some editions already do), just to see how they play?

Yours faithfully, P. J. KORSHIN (Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania), 1005 Greenwood Avenue, Wyncote, Pennsylvania 19095, November 25.

### Essential expletive

From Mr R. J. White

Sir, I disagree with your leading article that the word "bloody" was introduced by the Prince of Wales ("Stanky blank", November 21; see also report and photograph, early editions, November 19).

Frankie Howard, who used very little bad language, used to say that the expletive is sometimes essential to turn an ordinary line into a funny one. He told a joke about an hotel guest who was given a trumpet to play if he wanted to know the time in the night. When he did so another guest shouted: "Who's that playing the trumpet at three o'clock in the bloody morning?"

Yours faithfully, R. J. WHITE, 1 Chemin de la Rive Bergère, 06480 La Colle sur Loup, France, November 23.





NEWS

Pinochet 'unfit to stand trial'

General Augusto Pinochet, 83, was assessed by a psychiatrist yesterday as his lawyers prepared an attempt to persuade Jack Straw that he is mentally unfit to stand trial.

He is under the care of the medical director of the Grovelands Priory Hospital, north London, where he has been recovering from spinal surgery.

Blair addresses Eire parliament

Tony Blair used the first speech ever delivered by a British Prime Minister to Ireland's parliament to herald the end of centuries of Anglo-Irish enmity and the start of a new era of friendship and co-operation.

Rape family's tragedy

The suffering of a family was disclosed after a burglar was given five life sentences for rape. As William Kenealy went to prison it emerged that the girl's sister had drowned and her body lay undiscovered for two weeks.

Japan angers POWs

British veterans who suffered at the hands of the Japanese in prison camps during the Second World War expressed outrage over the decision by a Tokyo court to reject their claims for compensation.

Child jail troubles

Eleven teenage tearaways are to be removed from Britain's troubled first child jail after the Home Office ordered urgent refurbishments and improvements in staff training and control.

Boost for fathers

A judge gave a boost to "father power" by ruling that a father was the right parent of a broken marriage to bring up his two-year-old child.

Plan to beat poverty

A radical, uncosted plan to close the health gap between rich and poor by eliminating poverty was put forward by an independent Government inquiry.

Judge pays costs

Judge Richard Gee, who escaped a second fraud trial after doctors said the ordeal could drive him to suicide, failed to have his legal costs refunded.

Loss for Blair

Tony Blair is about to lose one of his closest aides and is struggling to find a replacement to take on the treadmill of life inside his private office.

Santa gets education clause

Rex, a middle-aged man who answers only to the name of Father Christmas, is running Britain's first course in Santa Clausing. Three students at an adult education college are learning how to befriend children without scaring parents.



Dermot Cronin, Principal Keeper of North Foreland Lighthouse at Broadstairs, which became fully automated yesterday at a ceremony attended by the Duke of Edinburgh. Walney Lighthouse, Barrow-in-Furness, is now Britain's last to be fully manned.

BUSINESS

M&S shares dip: Shares in Marks & Spencer fell almost 6 per cent on confirmation of the appointment of Peter Salisbury as chief executive.

Oil threat: Thousands of jobs could be lost in Britain if Exxon and Mobil receive regulatory approval for a proposed £145 billion merger.

US deal: J Sainsbury is expanding in America with the £294 million purchase of Star Markets in New Hampshire.

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 72.6 to 5279.7. The pound fell .06 cents to £1.6612 and .27 pennig to DM2.8297.

SPORT

Tennis: Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski face each other today in the ATP world championship.

Cricket: England delayed selection of their team for the second Test against Australia in Perth when Graham Thorpe suffered a recurrence of his back injury.

Football: Liverpool are set to complete the signing from Istanbulspor of Jean-Michel Ferré, a defensive midfielder who has played five times for France.

Rugby union: Andy Irvine resigned from his post on the Scottish RU, pouring scorn on the general committee and its executive chairman, Duncan Paterson.

ARTS

On song: Lesley Garrett sings a traditional Rosina in The Barber of Seville at the Coliseum, and proves that you can hear every word a soprano sings.

School rules: "If you want to create a cultured nation, you first create cultured children" - Richard Morrison states the obvious, and hopes somebody is listening.

Pop 1: Jools Holland on the Thames Basin v the Mississippi Delta for rhythm and blues (the Thames is better) plus Caidin Moran on real lyrics, and new jazz albums.

Pop 2: David Sinclair reviews the best of the week's new pop albums; plus the Lighthouse Family in concert, and a jazz singer who delivers a surprising punch.

FEATURES

Fables and foundlings: The abandonment of children by their parents has a long history.

Parking rage: "Most drivers in London are trying to find a place to park so they can finally get out and do last year's Christmas shopping," says Joe Joseph.

White magic: Jane Shilling suggests a foray into snow white or ivory.

Italian job: Rupert Murdoch tells Raymond Snoddy about Milan-based News Corp Europe and his plans to forge a European partnership.

Christmas books: Inside today's paper: A 16-page guide on what to look for in the bookshops this Christmas.

It is probable that for the majority of Chileans, the decision by the Law Lords of Great Britain, who reversed this country's High Court decision this year which recognised the lifelong immunity of state for Senator Augusto Pinochet, came as a surprise.

Pinochet judgment: National Trust policies: stewardship of countryside: demise of poetry list: electoral closed lists: non-payment for water; Wooster monode; expletives not deleted; irritating expressions; M&S difficulties.



TOMORROW IN THE SATURDAY TIMES

DANNY'S BACK: Danny Baker resumes his Saturday football column.

THE THUG'S THUG: Meet Vinnie Jones, the footballer who turned violence on the pitch into a screen career.



TV LISTINGS

Preview: Bullets fly as a police informer gets violent. Dangerfield (BBC1, 9.30pm). Review: Paul Hoggart on Jools Holland doing a Judith Chalmers. Pages 54, 55

OPINION

A debt unpaid

China's overture has been ill-rewarded by Japan's Government, which has gratuitously angered and offended all Chinese by its stubborn and foolish refusal to include in the joint communiqué the simple word, sorry.

Gentlemen & players

Some cogs in the machinery of government are bigger than others. The forthcoming departure of John Holmes will leave an especially large hole at the centre of Downing Street.

Free books for schools

Oliver Goldsmith thought the pleasure of reading an excellent book was like gaining a new friend. Sadly, some children never make such friends.

COLUMNS

PHILIP HOWARD

The great dead thinkers have at bottom a good sense which is badly needed in the scrums and the saddles of English sport of pigs managed by donkeys.

SIMON JENKINS

Like the storyteller, the bookshop carries the message. It watches, listens, holds the tribal secrets tight bound on its shelves. Like the storyteller, it refreshes its message with new titles every day.

MARY ANN SEIGHART

Standards of state secondary schools in London are shockingly, disgracefully bad. The world-class capital city has a third-class education.

DEBATES

Canon Peter Boulton, former Chaplain to the Queen; Professor Nicholas Kartz, physicist; Roland Alphonso, saxophonist; Jane Annakin, theatrical agent.

LETTERS

Pinochet judgment: National Trust policies: stewardship of countryside: demise of poetry list: electoral closed lists: non-payment for water; Wooster monode; expletives not deleted; irritating expressions; M&S difficulties.

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,960

A crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1 through 28 indicating starting positions for the clues.

- ACROSS
1 Book one passed on to descendants by relative (7).
5 Man about to fall to take catch, for example (7).
9 Insect flew pointlessly into food store (9).
10 Show, not a delightful entertainment (5).
11 Apocalyptic future vision warrior's given to his continent (5,3,5).
13 In summary, have finished struggle with wife (8).
15 Compelling dope to stay in bed (6).
17 Notice animals accommodated on Ark, for example (6).
19 Writer's block restricting girl (8).
22 Seen fawning revilingly round a king, Ulysses' successor (9,4).
25 River commonly said to be dark brown (5).

A word search puzzle titled 'Solution to Puzzle No 20,959' with a grid of letters and words to find.

AN INFORMATION

A collection of small advertisements and notices, including car reports, hours of darkness, and newspaper recycling information.

FORECAST

Weather forecast sections for 'AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY' and 'AROUND BRITAIN TODAY', providing temperature and weather conditions for various regions.

NOON TODAY

Weather maps and charts showing high and low pressure systems, wind directions, and tide information for various locations.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

A campaign logo and text encouraging newspaper recycling, featuring a tree icon and the website 'easy.solutions@demon'.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

A table showing weather data for various UK locations, including temperature, wind speed, and conditions.

AROUND BRITAIN TODAY

A table showing weather data for various UK locations, including temperature, wind speed, and conditions.

HIGH TIDES

A table listing high tide times for various locations across the UK.

LOWEST

A table listing low tide times for various locations across the UK.

RNLI RESCUE UPDATE - 27 NOVEMBER 1998

A fundraising appeal for the RNLI, showing the number of lives saved and the amount of money raised, with a call to action to donate.

Times Two Crossword, page 56

A vertical advertisement strip on the right side of the page, featuring logos for M&S, Mer talk, and Sheikh, along with promotional text.

# THE TIMES



INSIDE SECTION  
**2**  
TODAY

**BUSINESS**  
Fabric of textile industry woven into new pattern  
PAGE 33



**ARTS**  
Lesley Garrett plays beautifully to the Coliseum crowd  
PAGES 38-48



**MEDIA**  
Rupert Murdoch talks to Raymond Snoddy  
PAGES 42-45

**MODULAR A LEVELS MUDDLE**  
Page 47

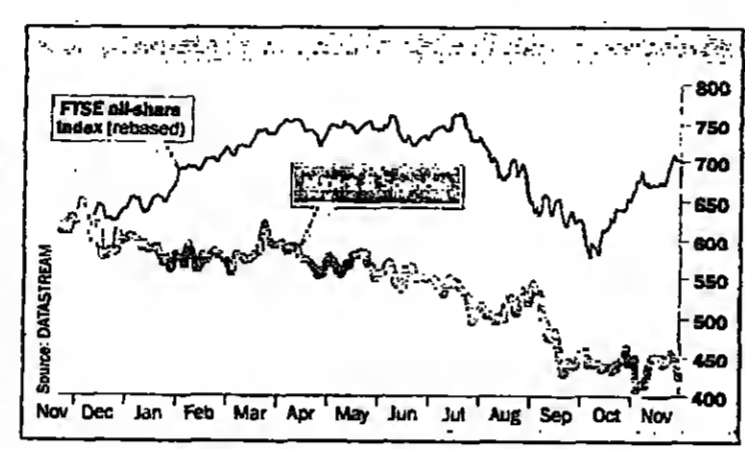
BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 27 1998

## M&S board reshuffle fails to win over City

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM  
MARKS & SPENCER shares dived 6 per cent yesterday as investors vented their disappointment with the retailer's boardroom reshuffle which they said did not go far enough. The company announced that Peter Salsbury, who has worked there for 28 years and was the favoured candidate of Sir Richard Greenbury, the current chairman and chief executive, is to be appointed chief executive, starting in February next year.

in M&S's share price from 445p to 421p. The company did not appoint an outside deputy chief executive, a move that some institutional shareholders had been pressing for. "They are merely giving the job [of chief executive] in a man who, along with all the others, is responsible for all the current problems", John Richards, retail analyst at BT Alex Brown said. "All that has happened is that the one person who was from outside the company — namely Keith Oates — has gone."



Mr Salsbury said that Sir Richard would not now be working for the company part-time, but insisted that the relationship would work. "The confidence I have is because he's been very, very clear that this is a new learning situation for him. He has to learn to be a good non-executive chairman."

There is an early retirement scheme set up by the company, under which directors can receive the equivalent of full pay until the age of 60 if they leave earlier, but this assumes 25 years' service with the company. Mr Oates has worked for Marks & Spencer for 15 years. Mr Oates was paid a salary of £526,000 last year. His total pay, including bonuses, benefits and profit-sharing, was £646,000. According to the company's latest annual report, he also owns 307,574 shares in the company, worth £1.3 million, and options worth at least £2.5 million.

## Merger talks send oil shares soaring

EUROPEAN oil shares were set alight yesterday over transatlantic rumours that Exxon and Mobil are plotting the world's largest industrial merger. Shares in Shell Transport, BP, Elf and Total climbed on hopes of a merger wave. The prospect of Exxon and Mobil forming a \$240 billion colossus, dominating the world oil industry was enough to shake off concern about the oil price that finished the day at just \$10.96 a barrel and could soon sink below \$10 a barrel.

Standard Oil of Indiana in a deal that will save \$2 billion with drastic cutbacks in staff. Fergus MacLeod, oil analyst at BT Alex Brown, sees the Exxon-Mobil talks as a potential rerun of BP-Amoco. In this case, the parsimonious Exxon would wield the knife on Mobil's assets. "Exxon consistently has a return on capital a few points higher than Mobil. Exxon would get an efficiency gain with somebody else's assets."



Ralph Findlay, left, Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries finance director, and David Thompson

## Marston's denounces £262m bid by W&DB

MARSTON, Thompson & Evershed, the Pedigree bitter brewer, yesterday branded a £262 million bid from Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries as "unwelcome" and "wholly inadequate".

W&DB, which signalled its interest two weeks ago, is offering 280p a share — 182p in cash and the rest in shares. Marston's shares rose 4 1/2p to 287 1/2p, as analysts predicted that W&DB would have to sweeten its offer.

Marston's said that it would consider improving its own scheme to use the sale of its tenanted pubs to return £60 million to shareholders. The disposal, via a securitisation deal with Nomura, the securities house, would raise £137 million.

## Sainsbury's in £294m US acquisition

J SAINSBURY, the supermarket group, confirmed its determination to become a big player in America by spending £294 million to acquire Star Markets, a chain of food stores based in New England. It is acquiring the business from Investcorp, the Bahrain investment group. Star Markets has 25 supermarkets and 24 superstores in the Boston and Cape Cod area and employs 10,000 people.

Sainsbury's already owns Shaw's, a 126-store chain of supermarkets that operates in six New England states and employs 22,000. The deal will mean its market share in New England will rise from 15 per cent to 21 per cent. "We believe that we've got a very strong business in the US, and are committed to rising to \$10 billion (£6 billion) of US sales over the next five to seven years," Dino Adriano, chief executive, said. Star Markets had turnover of about \$1 billion last year, and the deal will take Sainsbury's total sales in the US to \$4 billion.

## Sheikh breathes life into Dragon

SHEIKH Hamdan al-Maktoum, the racehorse owner, yesterday emerged as the driving force behind a plan to revitalise Dragon Oil, one of the more exotic companies in London's beleaguered energy sector.

The shares are being acquired from Satellite Overseas, the investment vehicle of Arifin Panigoro, the Indonesian businessman. Mr Panigoro, chairman of Dragon, offered the stake for sale in May, seeking to raise funds at a time when his diverse business interests were severely affected by the Asian credit crunch.

Dragon's main interest is in a Turkmenistan production licence in the Caspian, which has proven and probable reserves of about 600 million barrels of oil and about three trillion cubic feet of gas.

Dragon was formed as Oliver Resources in 1991 by Oliver Waldron, a former Irish rugby international. Now chief executive, he said yesterday the deal offered by al-Maktoum promised "terrific synergies" as Enoc is an upstream operation whereas Dragon is a downstream oil company.

### BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES  
FTSE 100: 5827.9 (+72.6)  
Yield: 2.77%  
FTSE All Share: 2660.88 (+27.98)  
Nikkei: 15207.77 (+134.30)  
New York: Dow Jones: Closed  
S&P Composite: Closed  
US RATE: Federal Funds: Closed (4.75%)  
Long bond: 6.00%  
Yield: 5.18%  
LONDON MONEY: 3-mth interbank: 6.5% (6.5%)  
Life long gilt: 116.73 (116.10)  
Future (Dec):  
STERLING: New York: Closed (1.8803)  
London: 1.6611 (1.8820)  
DM: 2.8298 (2.8330)  
FF: 9.4882 (9.4886)  
SF: 2.2268 (2.2411)  
Yen: 203.45 (202.8)  
£ Index: 101.8 (101.7)  
DOLLAR: London: Closed (1.7034)  
DM: 6.7111  
FF: 1.4110  
SF: 121.70  
Yen: 107.1 (107.4)  
Tokyo close Yen 121.81  
MONTH'S GAIN: Brent15-day(Feb): \$11.20 (\$11.20)  
GOLD: London close: \$296.45 (\$296.05)  
\* denotes midday trading price

Hopes of rate cut boost FTSE  
THE FTSE 100 advanced 72.6 to 5,827.9 yesterday amid rising hopes of another imminent cut in base rates.

The Confederation of British Industry cut its forecast for United Kingdom growth next year and joined the British Chambers of Commerce in demanding a reduction in interest rates to help industry avert recession. The confederation's latest monthly industrial trends survey, published yesterday, indicates that total order books remained at their lowest point since 1992.

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# CBI slashes growth forecast back to 0.7%

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE Confederation of British Industry yesterday slashed its forecast for UK growth next year and, along with the British Chambers of Commerce, demanded another cut in base rates.

CBI's latest monthly industrial trends survey which showed that total order books remained at their lowest point since 1992. Sterling's fall since the summer helped export orders but domestic orders weakened.

Kate Barker, CBI chief economic adviser, said: "We face a major slowdown next year and the risks to growth are clearly on the downside, while inflationary pressures are slight."

Bank emphasised that the MPC would be as assiduous in avoiding an overshoot of the Government's inflation target as an overshoot. He also said that this week's news of a record trade deficit in September would weigh in the committee's discussions.

that level throughout 2000. Separate figures released yesterday by the British Bankers' Association showed that net consumer credit rose by £273 million in October. A smaller rise than the £946 million recorded in September.

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

### BOC sells Benelux and German units

BOC GROUP, the UK industrial gases company, is selling its Benelux and German industrial gases operations to Air Liquide of France for £112 million. Announcing the sale, Danny Rosenkrantz, BOC chief executive, said: "It was hard to see our Benelux and German businesses reaching the necessary level of returns despite the excellent efforts of our people in those territories."

### ICL signs for schools

ICL, the information technology company, will today sign the first National Grid for Learning Private Finance Initiative contract. ICL says that the contract, worth £12.5 million, will give 14,000 Scottish schoolchildren throughout Moray access to the latest IT technology.

### OfTel wins court ruling

THE High Court has upheld a ruling by OfTel, the telecoms regulator, that gives smaller mobile phone operators more marketing freedom. In May OfTel changed a rule that obliged all network operators to provide airtime to retailers selling mobile services directly to the public.

### Richemont suffers fall

RICHEMONT, the Swiss investment company that owns Rothmans International tobacco and Vendome Luxury Group, suffered a 3.3 per cent fall in attributable profits to £193.9 million in the first half. Operating profits were 15.1 per cent lower at £479.1 million on turnover down 5.4 per cent to £2.19 billion.

### Delta in £27m disposal

DELTA, the engineering and electrical group, yesterday announced the £27 million sale of its materials business to Cerro Metal Products, part of the Marmon group of the US. The disposal comprises four companies based in the UK with 1,080 employees.

### Sedgemoor slips back

SEDGEMOOR, the electronic component distribution company, announced a drop in profits and sales due to "particularly harsh" market conditions. Pre-tax profits fell to £4.2 million from £7.2 million for the six months to September 30, on turnover on continuing operations down from £34.1 million to £30.4 million.

### Diploma dividend held

DIPLOMA, the industrial distribution group, is maintaining a total dividend of 14.5p a share even after suffering a fall in pre-tax profits to £13 million from £21.6 million in the year to the end of September. The profits fall was despite an increase in sales to £292.9 million from £257.5 million.

### Brockhampton ahead

BROCKHAMPTON HOLDINGS, which trades as Portsmouth Water and supplies water to homes in Hampshire, and West Sussex, reported pre-tax profits for the six months to September 30 of £4.28 million, up from £4.18 million last time. Turnover for the period was little changed at £14.1 million.

### TOURIST RATES

Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.70	2.72	207.92
Austria Sch	20.91	19.25	0.667
Belgium F	64.89	66.99	3.262
Canada Cdn	2.656	2.488	3.25
Denmark Kr	0.8795	0.8080	13.07
France F	11.35	10.46	303.05
Germany DM	5.86	5.26	10.10
Finland Mkk	9.15	8.40	252.25
France F	9.98	9.18	14.32
Germany DM	2.993	2.75	2.04
France F	5.91	4.62	512.90
Hong Kong \$	12.69	12.48	7.87
India Rs	129	109	1.624
Indonesia Rp	15691	10691	
Ireland P	1.1125	1.035	
Israel Sh	1.24	0.58	
Italy Lire	2976	2739	

### ICI sells power station to Enron

BY CARL MORTISHED

ICI has agreed to sell a power station and utilities business at its Teesside chemical plant to Enron for £300 million, reviving hopes that ICI's disposal programme is back on track.

The disposal programme had recently suffered setbacks with the Crofield sale scuppered by US competition authorities. The company needs to sell remaining businesses totalling some £1.5 billion in sales, a large component of which is its ethylene cracker, or catalyst plant, also located on the Wilton site.

BP owns 20 per cent of ICI's cracker and is known to be interested as it still has a requirement for more ethylene. Talks fell apart after the two companies reached a deadlock over price but Mike Buzzano of BP Chemicals reckons a deal is still on the table.

The Wilton power station, built 50 years ago, mainly supplies steam to chemical customers on Teesside. Profits from the plant and utilities were £35 million last year and ICI said it would book a post-tax profit of £120 million on completion.

Enron said that the Wilton power plant and utilities complemented its own Teesside Power Station, built some six years ago. Enron's 1,875 megawatt plant is the largest gas-fired station in the world, dwarfing the 155-megawatt Wilton plant.

# BA's CityFlyer Express buyout reaps venture capital rewards

BY ADAM JONES

BRITISH AIRWAYS is buying CityFlyer Express, one of its franchisees, for £75 million, leading to a windfall for venture capitalists and managers.

The deal has also prompted a new row between BA and Virgin Atlantic, which claimed yesterday that it was not given a fair chance to bid for the airline itself.

CityFlyer is the second-biggest user of Gatwick Airport — after BA — running services to several European cities, including Amsterdam, Newcastle, Dublin and Zurich. Its staff wear BA uniforms and the planes are decorated with the full BA livery.

In the last financial year, it made a pre-tax profit of £6.4 million on sales of £59.4 million. CityFlyer is 40 per cent owned by staff, including Robert Wright, the co-founder, and Brad Burgess, the managing director. The other 60 per cent is owned by a consortium of venture capitalists led by 3i and including Mercury Asset Management, Gresham Trust and Friends Ivory & Sims.

They are celebrating massive increases in their capital. It is understood that Mercury, for instance, has turned an investment of about £300,000 into nearly £10 million.

BA said the deal did not mean that it was abandoning its franchise system, the expansion of which had led some observers to suggest — to the irri-



Brad Burgess, CityFlyer Express managing director, and Angela Lane, of 3i, celebrating the £75 million deal yesterday

chase and neither does it signal a change in our franchise strategy of working with airlines to spread our brand."

Richard Branson said Virgin Atlantic had been approached by HSBC, the CityFlyer adviser, in the spring of this year as a possible buyer for CityFlyer. He said he was never supplied with a price despite requests and claimed BA might have had a secretive pre-emption right.

BA and CityFlyer denied this yesterday but Mr Branson said he would pursue the matter with the Office of Fair Trading.

One source close to the discussions with Virgin claimed, however, that Virgin had been asked to make an offer, setting its own price, but refused.

### IMF social policy tops G7 agenda

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE Group of Seven industrialised nations is actively discussing the idea of merging the interim and development committees of the International Monetary Fund. Such a merger would, for the first time, force the IMF to take account of social and structural policies alongside financial and economic issues.

Discussions about a merger are running in parallel to a French proposal, aimed at the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Washington in October, that the interim committee should be strengthened and given executive and voting powers.

However, there is a growing view among G7 officials and economic development professionals that social policy has to be integrated into the mainstream work of the IMF and that, far from achieving this, a strengthened interim committee would further downgrade

social policy and the work of the development committee.

It is believed the World Bank, which is not represented on the interim committee, supports a merger that would, for the first time, give it an active voice at the top table of policymaking within the IMF.

Social policy has been given far more emphasis than ever before since the Asian crisis erupted more than a year ago. In the G7 statement of October 30, it agreed to a new World Bank emergency facility to provide extra concessional funding to the most vulnerable social groups, saying that more attention should be given to the poor in times of crisis.

It remains the case, however, that IMF adjustment plans often mean cuts to social programmes. The hope of those who support a merger between the interim and development committees is that social spending could be ring-fenced.

### German's withdrawal hits Scotia

BY PAUL DURMAN

SHARES in Scotia Holdings fell 28½p to 89p, close to a record low, yesterday when Boehringer Ingelheim terminated its agreement to develop Foscan, the cancer drug that is the British company's most important product.

The German pharmaceutical company was one of two development partners that last year agreed to pay Scotia up to \$39 million (£23 million) for the rights to Foscan, which is activated by laser beam. This was regarded as an important validation of the drug.

Boehringer Ingelheim said it was dropping Foscan because of the strength of its own cancer pipeline. It said it still believed Foscan was "an interesting and valuable product". Scotia said it remained optimistic about Foscan. It will not have to return any of the \$21 million it has received.

### UK productivity data 'flawed'

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

GORDON BROWN'S efforts to address Britain's apparently poor productivity record are likely to be futile because the problem has been greatly overstated, a new report claims.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies argues that the figures on which the Chancellor has based his productivity campaign are flawed and that in reality there is little productivity gap between the UK and its main competitors.

Mr Brown stated in the pre-Budget report earlier this month that UK productivity lags France and Germany by 20 per cent and the US by 40 per cent.

However, Rachel Griffith and Helen Simpson, the authors of *Productivity and the Role of Government*, argue that the Chancellor has failed to adjust his figures to take into account longer working hours in the US and the greater proportion of out-dated

plant machinery used by British industry. If workers' hours are included in the calculation, the productivity gap with the US is halved. The gap almost entirely disappears if the data is adjusted for the state of factory machinery.

As a result, the report argues that Britain's fundamental problem is one of historical low levels of investment. It argues that policies outlined by Mr Brown to tackle this problem — including R&D tax credits, increased capital allowances for small firms and a change to the tax treatment of venture capital investments — will help tackle some of the problems.

However, the IFS cautions that the benefits are likely to be limited because small firms do not account for a large overall share of investment.

Commentary, page 31

### Perpetual warning on volatility

BY GAVIN LUMSDEN

PERPETUAL, the fund management group, achieved a 22.2 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £72.8 million in the year to September 30 but gave warning that earnings growth was all the mercy of volatile stock markets.

An otherwise favourable financial year ended badly as world stock markets collapsed, wiping £1.8 billion off Perpetual's funds under management, more than twice the amount it took from new investors.

Although assets under the company's control have since recovered to £9.8 billion, this is £600 million less than Perpetual managed in March.

Marty Arbib, chairman, said the progress of the stock market and the Government's launch of individual savings accounts (ISAs) — which will replace Peps and Tessas from next April — were the "two challenging issues" facing the company in the coming year.

If markets remained resilient the final sales of Peps would be "buoyant" he said. Thereafter, the complexity of ISAs and their lower investment levels would result in "muted" sales for the second half of the year.

However, Mr Arbib said this would be compensated for by Perpetual's entry into the personal pensions market in the new year.

Perpetual is paying a final dividend of 38p bringing the total for the year to 75p, up from 62p in 1997.

Tempus, page 32

### Cashflow bond raises £210m for RoadChef

ROADCHEF, the motorway service station group in which Nikko, the finance house, took a 45 per cent stake earlier this year, has raised £210 million from investors with a bond issue using cashflow as security (Richard Miles writes).

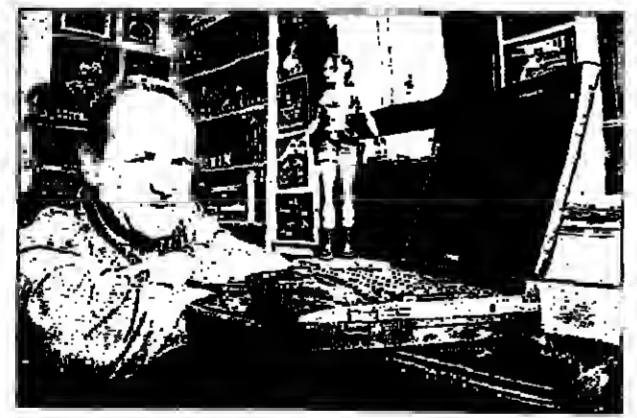
RoadChef was bought for £175 million by a consortium of Nikko's principal finance

unit, RoadChef management and a fund advised by Cabot Square Capital. RoadChef subsequently absorbed Blue Boar and Take A Break, two smaller service station companies, in an £80 million deal.

Tim Ingram Hill, RoadChef chairman, said the bond will fund expansion and refinance initial acquisition debt.

**IN Business life TOMORROW**

**Ian Livingstone, chairman of Eidos, opens up his office in Work Station plus Who really runs Britain's companies**



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**Hostile rejected by Mar**

**Weather restricts Fuller's**

**Two As factors**

**Bristol United identifies bid ta**

Business Roundup

Benelux... German units... operations to be...

for schools... Finance Initiative...

is court ruling... the telephone...

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£27m disposal... the company...

or slips back... the share price...

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# Non-exec stress holds key at M&S



## COMMENTARY by our City Editor

For almost three weeks the non-executive directors of Marks & Spencer have been coping with a crisis. Brian Baldock and Dame Stella Rimington, in particular, have been working extraordinarily long hours trying to sort out the unseemly debate over who should run the company. While this crucial issue has been decided, various of their boardroom colleagues were dashing round the world on behalf of other organisations. Conference calls and communication but the unusual, and some might argue unnecessary, task of finding a chief executive in less than 20 days required the time-and-a-half involvement of those who were leading the hunt.

Such crises are, of course, best avoided but in the real world leading companies will increasingly be caught by surprise by events. That is when the executives call upon their non-executive colleagues and when the latter really begin to earn their fees, and more.

If non-executive directors are to be valuable to a business, then they need to be able to do very much more than turn up for monthly meetings, although even dealing with the paperwork for those can be a time-consuming business. This raises the question of what commitment should be expected from a non-executive director, and what remuneration in return.

Brian Baldock was paid £50,000 by M&S last year and

Dame Stella, a former head of M&S, a meagre £34,000. At that level of remuneration, it is not, perhaps, surprising that the majority of non-executives feel that they need to assemble a portfolio of directorships to sustain themselves.

These people may be brilliant minds, able to switch from one company to another, one industry to another, without any confusion or time conflicts. The legendary Lord Marshall, for instance, was this week merging Siebe with BTR without any hint of being preoccupied by the crowded agenda that he juggles.

But if companies are to get the best from such talents, they may want rather more time than some multi-directorship individuals can devote to them.

At Marks & Spencer, the succession has been settled — up to a point. A new chairman — a high-powered outsider, even if not Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth — will have to be found to succeed Sir Richard Greenbury. In the meantime, the challenge for the directors will be to ensure that Peter Salisbury is allowed to do the job he has been appointed to with support, but not dictatorship, from the chairman. It could be a time-consuming challenge. Industry needs to give deep

consideration to the evolving role of non-executives, who are, in any case, mis-named. They may be part-time, but directors could hardly be more executive than Mr Baldock, Dame Stella and their colleagues have been forced to be in recent days. A new job description, and the money to make it worthwhile, could ensure that boards make a more positive contribution. Then some crises might even be avoided.

**Exxon follows the path of Saddam**

Big oil has been cutting costs for most of the 1990s to accommodate oil prices that refused to match the optimistic expectations on which boards had based their budgets. Eventually it ran out of cuts and still the oil price fell. Merging with rivals has become the only way to find new costs to cut and to deliver increasing returns that are just not available from normal trading. BP broke ranks when it agreed

a \$50 billion takeover of Amoco in the spring, creating the world's biggest industrial merger. Not for long. Now Mobil seems likely to become Exxon's \$60 billion Thanksgiving turkey, reuniting America's two biggest oil companies 87 years after the US anti-trust authorities tore them apart.

Amazingly, reconstituting the guts of the old Standard Oil would still make it only the third most valuable company on Wall Street. Once the two-day hiatus of Thanksgiving is past, both stocks can be expected to spurt, but "Exoil" is still likely to lag a few dozen billion behind US General Electric and Microsoft, the trust busters' latest target.

The first truly global industry, the model for all future multinationals and intercontinental leviathans, is no longer top dog. Information technology and pharmaceuticals, which are less exposed to economic cycles, have rushed past. Finance is on the march.

Such new realities help to explain how shares of the biggest corporations can keep rising, di-

forced from wavering and unpropitious economic prospects. In the era of shareholder value, economic reality is no excuse for the falling profits that Exxon and Mobil, along with other oil companies, will make this year and are likely to show next.

Losers must come up with something. Consolidation to cut competition aims to cut \$2 billion a year from BP/Amoco's combined costs. "Exoil" might cut three times that, after an even bigger one-off massacre of jobs.

Regulators no longer seem to worry so much about mergers to consolidate troubled industries. That even applies to oil, whose competitive credentials always excite deep suspicions.

Some assets would just have to be sold, in this case partly to BP. And if this deal founders, surely Mobil will merge with Chevron, or buy Atlantic Richfield, and Exxon will find another partner.

Wall Street's get-out is not, however, available to the many developing countries that rely on oil, which have seen its price fall to a

quarter-century low in real terms this week, and no longer have enough power to fix the price.

There might be a case for consolidation there, too, allowing bigger players to cut excess output. But when Saddam Hussein tried that on Kuwait, the authorities took a somewhat different line.

**Brown has his work cut out**

Productivity always seemed an odd issue for Gordon Brown to make the core theme of the next Budget. The term itself is enough to send most of the population to sleep, while there is little agreement among the economics profession about how productivity can be effectively measured. It is the kind of issue normally best left to learned papers and earnest expert debate.

None of this has deterred the Chancellor from using productivity as a stick to prod Britain's management. Mr Brown has indicated that the Treasury will do what it can to improve Britain's record but much of the impetus must come from industry itself. Yet this approach is littered with pitfalls, not least that it is unclear the productivity record of British

industry is nearly as dismal as the Chancellor likes to claim.

Yesterday it was the turn of the respected Institute for Fiscal Studies to join the fray, pointing out that the data the Chancellor likes to wheel out is a little on the crude side. If working hours and the poor state of Britain's physical capital is taken into account, there does not appear to be much of a productivity gap, the IFS claims. The problem is one of underinvestment rather than productivity and here the Government is probably more at fault than the private sector. The IFS concludes, in rather pessimistic fashion, that it will take at least a generation to turn Britain's investment performance around. Even by the Chancellor's own high productivity standards, he will have his work cut out solving this one by March.

**Marley apparition**

MARLEY has spent the best part of a decade out on the tiles without attracting a partner. Not was there, it seems, any prospect. In the end, frustrated value hunter Phillips & Drew, still stuck with 15 per cent of Marley shares and badly needing performance, has lost its patience and sponsored what amounts to a management buy-in. An all-share offer would leave Marley holders with 94 per cent of the combined group, but P&D is pledged to the cheeky outsiders' break-up plan if no normal bidder emerges. Shareholders should not have to resort to quite such desperate measures.

# Hostile bid rejected by Marley

By Kimberly McDonald

MARLEY, the building materials group, yesterday rejected a £283 million hostile bid from John Mansfield, the timber merchant, calling the all-share offer unacceptable.

Mansfield, which is backed by Bryan Myerson and Julian Tregers UK Active Value fund, said it was offering 15 new shares in its company for every Marley share held. It said it would break up Marley by ousting its management team and selling its concrete and clay business.

The bid values Marley shares at 97½p. They leapt 13p to close at 98½p yesterday, indicating that the City believes that a higher offer for the group will materialise.

Marley's single largest shareholder is Phillips & Drew Fund Management, with 14.9 per cent. It is irrevocably committed to accept the offer, and in an unusual move, agreed to underwrite Mansfield's bid costs in the event that a higher offer emerges.

UK Active Value has a history of shareholder activism which

has shaken up companies as diverse as Signet, Greycall and Kenwood. It is chaired by Stuart Wallis, who made his reputation turning around Fisons, the pharmaceutical group, and worked with UKAV on shaking up Scholl, the footwear and personal products group.

Mansfield said yesterday that Marley's management had comprehensively failed its shareholders. "Marley's recently announced strategic review offers no realistic prospect for the enhancement of Marley's shareholder value," it added.

Analysts said the company has acquired various disparate businesses in different geographic areas and remains plagued by static sales and a languishing stock price.

The last straw came last month, when Marley further infuriated its institutional shareholders by allowing its chief executive and other senior employees to replace worthless options under the company's share-scheme with new, lower-priced options that were likely to yield a handsome profit.

# Weather restricts Fuller's

By Dominic Walsh

POOR summer weather and a big jump in development costs restricted half-year performance at Fuller's, the London brewer and pub operator.

The group nevertheless lifted pre-tax profits by 8 per cent to £6.53 million in the half year to September 26. Earnings per share reached 17.89p (16.75p) and the interim dividend per "A" share is 6 per cent higher at 3.82p.

Fuller's lifted capital expenditure from £7.2 million to £12.6 million, much of the focus being on Fine Line, its new bar concept. Four are already up and running and four further sites are in the pipeline. The recently acquired The Fence in Central London is also to be rolled out as a retail brand.

The difficult summer restricted like-for-like sales growth at its managed pubs and hotels division to just 1 per cent. The brewing division lifted own-beer sales by 8 per cent in a declining ale market, although like-for-like volumes in its tenanted estate were 3 per cent down.

# Two Laura Ashley factories go

By Sarah Cunningham

LAURA ASHLEY, the troubled clothing retailer, is set to make about 170 staff redundant after closing two of its factories. The job losses will cost the company £2 million.

An eleven-month search by the retailer has failed to find a buyer for its five factories. The two that are now set to close are at Oswestry, Shropshire, and at Helmond, in The Netherlands. Oswestry employs 73 staff while Helmond has 71. The company is cutting a further 28 jobs at its factory at Carno, in Mid Wales.

Stephen Cox, company secretary, said that about 20 more jobs are being created at Gresford, another of its Welsh factories, to take over some of the work done at the factories that are closing. Gresford currently employs 145 people, while Carno now has 203 and explains the company's third Welsh factory, employs 212.

Redundancy and closure costs will come out of £9 million set aside last year.

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# Bristol United Press identifies bid targets

BRISTOL United Press, the regional newspaper group, has identified a number of possible targets for acquisitions (Symond Snoddy writes).

The group is encouraged in the search by the performance of Wessex Newspapers, its most recent acquisition, which made an operating profit of £2.2 million in its second six months in group ownership. The Wessex result, achieved

despite increased investment in editorial content, helped to boost Bristol's pre-tax profits to a record £11.4 million in the six months to September 30. This compared with £6.9 million last time and was after a £2.8 million exceptional profit from selling 52 newsgazettes.

Earnings per share before exceptional items rose from 16.06p to 21.27p. The interim dividend is 6.75p, up 12.5 per cent.

Let's build a smarter world



France Telecom

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

# Eager insurers drool as GRE parades its wares

JUST like a Miss World contestant, Guardian Royal Exchange has no shortage of admirers. But instead of parading on the beaches of the Seychelles, John Robins, chief executive of GRE, has been strutting his stuff up and down the paved streets of the City.

The shares slumped 3p to 338p yesterday, but speculators say the price could be nearer 400p once the group has chosen from the list of admirers eagerly making their presence known.

They are said to include the French insurers AXA and Cerny's Allianz as well as our own Norwich Union, Liptiger at 440p, according to the influential fortnightly magazine *Assurant*.

Only last week, Mr Robins confirmed market speculation that the group was looking for a suitable partner. Brokers say GRE knows it is just not big enough to cut much of a figure in the growing world market.

Meanwhile, Countrywide Assurance, where GRE has a 16 per cent stake, firmed up to 114p, as a large line of stock went through. A total of 22.6 million shares, just over 6 per cent, were sold at 110p before being sold on at 111p. Was GRE the seller? A total of 45.91 million shares had changed hands by the close.

The rest of the equity market rebounded from two days of losses despite the absence of any lead from Wall Street. Reports overnight that Exxon and Mobil plan to merge rekindled speculative support and got share prices in London off to a flying start.

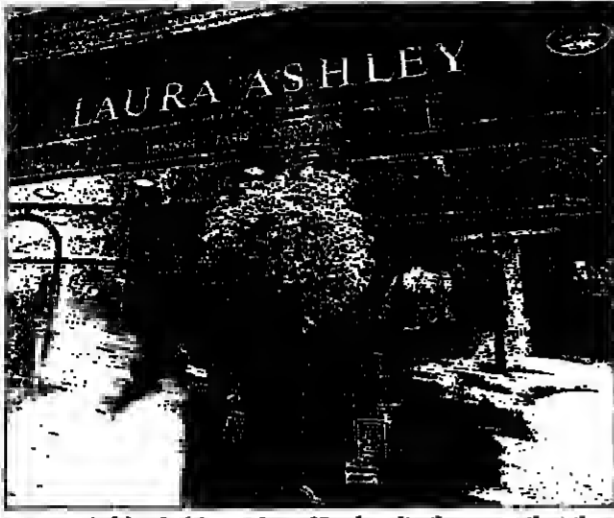
Continuing hopes of an imminent cut in interest rates and another spate of takeover news also boosted sentiment.

The FTSE 100 index showed signs of running out of steam towards the close, but still finished 72.6 points up at 5,827.9, while the FTSE 250 index rose 14.5 to 4,940.9. Total turnover reached 549 million shares.

SmithKline Beecham advanced 7p to 742p despite Schroders' broking arm reducing its recommendation from "add" to "reduce".

EMI continued to lose ground in the wake of this week's profits setback losing 9p to 350p. Wurd is that BT Alex Brown, the broker, is telling clients to "sell" and has set a target price of 300p.

Laura Ashley is one of the market's worst performers



Laura Ashley held steady at 15p despite the news that the company is going to close two of its manufacturing outlets

run almost as long as the Mousetrapp. Now the final curtain may come down after a £23 million offer from Mansfield. Marley will resist the move. However, the group's biggest shareholder PDFM, with a 14.9 per cent stake, has accepted the terms.

News of a bid approach hoisted BCH Group 49p to 218p.

Oppex's failure to agree production cuts left the price of Brent crude hovering just below \$11 a barrel. Losses were seen in British Oil, 14p to 158p, Ranger Oil, 22p to 322p, Hardy Oil, 9p to 138p, and XCL, 10p to 180p.

Kwik Fit hardened 4 1/2p to 550p as Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the broker, took an upbeat view of the shares.

Scott's Holdings was the worst performer in the market, falling 28p to 89p after its German partner Boehringer Ingelheim pulled out of the programme to develop Foscan, the neck-and-head cancer treatment. Nion Group fell 10p to 62p, on the back of a profits warning. A profits warning also took a heavy toll on Devro, down 43p to 191p. It expects pre-tax profits to come in at £40 million against £53 million last time.

Share purchases by one director were responsible for a rise of 15p to 160p in Macdonald Hotels. Donald Macdonald, chief executive, has bought 10,000 shares at 132p, taking his holding to 5.23 million, or 8.9 per cent.

GIIT-EDGED: Bond prices continued to build up a head of steam, with rises stretching to 12 in places among long-dated issues. Another weak industrial trends survey from the CBI and some upbeat comments from Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, paved the way for the latest surge. Mr George told MPs that interest rates would be cut aggressively if the inflation target required it. He also admitted that the latest trade deficit had increased the pressure for a cut in rates.

In the futures pit, the December series of the long gilt rose 6 1/2p to £116.73 as 23,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent surged £2 to £147.10, while in shorts Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 23p better at £106.52.

NEW YORK: Wall Street was closed for Thanksgiving.

ploughed some £90 million into the service company and is on the lookout for further suitable acquisitions.

Further contraction among the advertising agencies is a possibility if the outcome of talks between Abbott Mead Vickers, 48p, clearer at 408p, and its rival Omnicom come to fruition.

Talk of a bid for Marley has

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## MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	5827.9
S&P Composite	1106.2
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	15207.7 (+134.30)
Hong Kong:	
Hong Kong	10778.92 (+57.52)
Amsterdam:	
AEX Index	1134.69 (+19.94)
Sydney:	
ASX	2772.0 (+22.5)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	5061.63 (+107.58)
Singapore:	
Strat	1390.70 (+0.18)
Brussels:	
BEI 20	2944.20 (+36.69)
Paris:	
CAC 40	3815.53 (+65.69)
Zurich:	
SIX Gen	1362.30 (+25.60)
London:	
FT 30	3504.9 (+24.0)
FTSE 100	5827.9 (+72.6)
FTSE 250	4940.9 (+14.5)
FTSE 350	2758.3 (+20.1)
FTSE Europe 100	2714.4 (+21.1)
FTSE All-Share	3660.9 (+27.5)
FTSE Non Financials	2698.7 (+31.9)
FTSE Financials	152.34 (+0.2)
FTSE Govt Sec	112.58 (+0.9)
Barron's	6164
SEAO Volume	863.7M
US\$	1.6612 (-0.0005)
German Mark	2.2827 (-0.0027)
Exchange Index	101.6 (-0.1)
ESU	1.4410
EUR	1.1996
164.5 Oct 02 1% Jan 1987 - 100	
161.9 Oct 02 2.5% Jan 1987 - 100	

## RECENT ISSUES

Charwell	95	+2
Collective Assets Trust	117	
Five Air Chiles US0065	110	+1
Five Air US Ch 2040	116	+1
Five Aircom Warrants	15	
Garbar	103	+6
Guinness FII Ltd 18G	108	
Guinness FII Ltd 18G Inc	108	
Guinness FII Ltd 20p	107	
Honeycombe Leisure	64	+1
INVEDCO Rec Zero Div Pl	104	
INVEDCO Recovery Tr	102	
Marley B	83	
Marley B	11	
Nell Bldg Mills Cr Pl	105	
Natural Building Mills	5	
Offshore Tool & Energy	27	
Old Monk Company	54	
Prically Growth Tr	92	+2
REKAM B (100)	54	+1
Sigbee Ltd AML VCT	10	
Thistle Hotels Pl	15	
Xerox Warrants	13	

## RIGHTS ISSUES

Albion Prop Inv Np (3) 25	+5
Bloomsbury Np (145) 12	+5

## MAJOR CHANGES

Stock	Close	Change	Change %
Milton Temp	287 1/2	+41	+16.6
Abbot Mead	408	+42	+13.4
Povell	161	+16	+11.0
3i	590	+57	+10.6
Dillane Hill	179 1/2	+17	+10.4
Zenop	209	+18	+10.3
Beaumont	850	+60	+8.8
AMVSCAP	484	+24	+5.8
Kewill Sys	1135	+55	+5.8
BT	210	+10	+5.8
Schroders NV	1050	+48	+4.7
MNT Comd	992 1/2	+42	+4.4
Whitbread	825	+35	+4.4
Greentalk Op	350 1/2	+15	+4.3

# TEMPUS

## Investing In Investors

THERE is more to 3i than any old run of the mill investment trust. Increased consciousness of this, along with relief that the net asset value dilution was less marked than some feared, helped 3i shares to the top of the FTSE 100 best performers chart for yesterday.

What makes 3i different? As well as managing its own assets, it is also winning mandates from outside investment institutions to manage their allocations of venture and development capital. This earns 3i fees, but it also means that, if it and the outside money invest in parallel, 3i's risk can be spread without handing opportunities to rivals.

3i is also differentiated from most investment trusts through expertise. Since just after the Second World War the formerly monk-ridden Investors In Industry has been helping and profiting from small private companies.

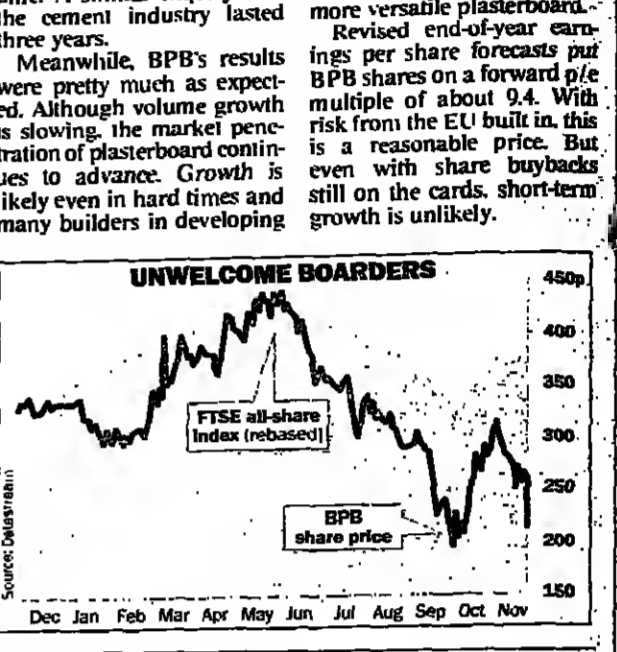
## BPB

A MERE 1 per cent fall in the price of plasterboard can wipe £10 million off BPB's annual profits. This explains why the City reacted so nervously to news that BPB's offices had been raided by European Commission officials, in what is believed to be an investigation into anti-competitive behaviour.

It was clear from yesterday's share price movement that many believe BPB's prices will be forced down as a result of this inquiry. Together with Germany's Knauf and France's Lafarge the three are thought to control 95 per cent of the European plasterboard market and each could be fined up to 10 per cent of sales.

In share price terms the worst is probably behind BPB but the EU's investigation will hang heavily over the stock until it is completed.

## UNWELCOME BOARDERS



## Yorkshire Water

YORKSHIRE WATER is desperately trying to shake off the shackles clamped upon it by Ofwat, the water regulator. But there are doubts over whether it can diversify quickly enough to keep the interest of shareholders who are used to bumper dividend growth rather than the belt-tightening that appears to be around the corner.

Yorkshire's dividend has been growing by 6 to 8 per cent above inflation. That growth rate is certain to be halted after 2000, when Yorkshire faces an enforced 15 to 20 per cent cut in average household water bills.

The utility may be able to persuade Ofwat to blunt its axe and cut bills by a smaller amount before the 2000 to 2005 pricing system is finalised next year. But this is not worth betting on, and whatever the outcome, it will not be easy for Yorkshire.

To offset the turmoil in its

## Perpetual

PERPETUAL shares have fallen a long way since the heady days of summer but its market value is still a handsome 9 per cent of funds under management.

The health of this unit trust and Pep manager depends on the condition of the stock markets and the enthusiasm for equity investment among its customers, who are predominantly retail clients. If equity markets do well, funds under management go up and fees from unit holders roll in. If markets rise, retail enthusiasm for equity investment also improves.

This is a two-way street and the summer slump in markets acted as a timely re-

# Fabric into r

Jason Nisse says evolution will leave Britain with fewer and leaner woollen mills

THE fact that Britain is on the cusp of a new era of wool production is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it means that the industry is finally becoming viable again. On the other, it means that the industry is being reshaped by a new breed of players.

The wool industry has been in a state of decline for decades. The number of wool producers has fallen from over 100,000 in the 1950s to just over 10,000 today. The number of wool mills has also fallen from over 1,000 to just over 100.

But now, a new breed of players is entering the market. These are large, multi-national companies with the resources to invest in modern wool production techniques. They are bringing in new technology and new breeds of sheep, and they are producing wool that is stronger, longer and more resilient than ever before.

This is a good thing for the wool industry. It means that wool is becoming a more attractive material for manufacturers and consumers alike. It means that wool is becoming a more viable alternative to synthetic fibres.

But it also means that the traditional wool producers and mills are being squeezed out of the market. They are being replaced by a smaller number of larger, more efficient producers and mills.

This is a process of evolution. It is a process that will leave Britain with fewer and leaner woollen mills. But it is a process that will also leave Britain with a more vibrant and competitive wool industry.

## COMMODITIES

LIFEE	
Dec	1000.00
Jan	1100.00
Feb	1200.00
Mar	1300.00
Apr	1400.00
May	1500.00
Jun	1600.00
Jul	1700.00
Aug	1800.00
Sep	1900.00
Oct	2000.00
Nov	2100.00

## LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

Long Gilt	116.15	116.92	116.99	116.73	0.19
Short Gilt	116.15	116.92	116.99	116.73	0.19
Three Month Euro	93.20	93.20	93.20	93.20	0.00
Three Month Euro	93.20	93.20	93.20	93.20	0.00
Three Month Euro	93.20	93.20	93.20	93.20	0.00

## DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.5674	1.5690
Canada	1.3904	1.3900
France	6.5782	6.5778
Germany	1.6362	1.6362
Italy	1.9362	1.9362
Japan	164.18	164.18
Spain	166.38	166.38
Switzerland	1.4826	1.4826
UK	1.9362	1.9362

## WALL STREET

Dec 25	5827.9
Dec 24	5755.3
Dec 23	5682.7
Dec 22	5610.1
Dec 21	5537.5
Dec 20	5464.9
Dec 19	5392.3
Dec 18	5319.7
Dec 17	5247.1
Dec 16	5174.5
Dec 15	5101.9
Dec 14	5029.3
Dec 13	4956.7
Dec 12	4884.1
Dec 11	4811.5
Dec 10	4738.9
Dec 9	4666.3
Dec 8	4593.7
Dec 7	4521.1
Dec 6	4448.5
Dec 5	4375.9
Dec 4	4303.3
Dec 3	4230.7
Dec 2	4158.1
Dec 1	4085.5

## LIFE OPTIONS

Call	Put	Call	Put
1000	1000	1000	1000
1100	1100	1100	1100
1200	1200	1200	1200
1300	1300	1300	1300
1400	1400	1400	1400
1500	1500	1500	1500
1600	1600	1600	1600
1700	1700	1700	1700
1800	1800	1800	1800
1900	1900	1900	1900
2000	2000	2000	2000

## EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 month	3 month	6 month	Call
Dollar	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25
Deutsche Mark	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25
French Franc	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25
Swiss Franc	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25
Yen	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25

## GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: Open	327.15	327.15
Close	327.15	327.15
High	327.15	327.15
Low	327.15	327.15
AM: 327.15	327.15	327.15
PM: 327.15	327.15	327.15

## STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mid Rates for November 26	Range	Close	1 month	3 Month
Australia	1.5674-1.5690	1.5674	1.5674	1.5674
Canada	1.3904-1.3900	1.3904	1.3904	1.3904
France	6.5782-6.5778	6.5782	6.5782	6.5782
Germany	1.6362-1.6362	1.6362	1.6362	1.6362
Italy	1.9362-1.9362	1.9362	1.9362	1.9362
Japan	164.18-164.18	164.18	164.18	164.18
Spain	166.38-166.38	166.38	166.38	166.38
Switzerland	1.4826-1.4826	1.4826	1.4826	1.4826
UK	1.9362-1.9362	1.9362	1.9362	1.9362

# Acting

THE man in charge of the... acting... the man in charge of the... acting... the man in charge of the... acting...

كندا من الاصل



Investors

...the City may no longer offer a guaranteed retirement post for Conservative former ministers, but this has not stopped the current crop of Tory frontbenchers from seeking out part-time business posts to supplement their meagre MPs income. An analysis of the Parliamentary Register of Members' Interests reveals that half the Shadow Cabinet benefit from paid posts, while a number of other Tory frontbenchers have multiple roles.

# Choice for over-employed frontbenchers

The City may no longer offer a guaranteed retirement post for Conservative former ministers, but this has not stopped the current crop of Tory frontbenchers from seeking out part-time business posts to supplement their meagre MPs income. An analysis of the Parliamentary Register of Members' Interests reveals that half the Shadow Cabinet benefit from paid posts, while a number of other Tory frontbenchers have multiple roles.

Post and the Sheffield Star, and continues as its non-executive chairman. However, his chairmanship of Numark, the pharmacy group, is a more recent affair and could indicate that even Sir Norman does not see his unexpected return to the front bench as more than temporary.

Although the City still yields some gainful employment for Tory frontbenchers, the real job opportunities appear to lie as paid Parliamentary advisers. The undoubted kings of this trade are John Greenway, home affairs spokesman, and Patrick Nicholls, agriculture spokesman. Mr Greenway enjoys a substantial top-up to his MPs salary from five paid consultancies. Some of these positions reflect his background as an insurance broker, but he has also just finished a con-

tract as Parliamentary adviser to Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television and continues to work on behalf of the ITV association, the Institute of Sales Promotion and the British Promotional Merchandise Association. Mr Nicholls enjoys a hefty private income advising six organisations as diverse as the Clinical Dental Technicians Association and the British Hardware Industry Forum.

Inevitably, such a range of outside employment has left some Tory frontbenchers vulnerable to potential conflicts of interest. Only last week, Francis Maude was accused by a Labour MP of concealing his interest in the Garmore Shared Equity Trust during debate on the introduction of individual savings accounts (Isas). Mr Maude has vigorously denied this allegation, pointing out that this arm of Garmore has no interest in Isas, but the dangers of a shadow Treasury team with wide City interests — especially when it has led the assault on

Geoffrey Robinson's lapses of memory — is all too clear. David Willets, education and employment spokesman, has also run into flak over his £25,000, one-day-a-month, consultancy for Monitor, a US firm specialising in workplace issues. Although, again, there was no suggestion that Mr Willets had breached any guidelines, Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, may have had the Willets case in mind when he warned Tory frontbenchers that they must take "great care" when taking up consultancies.

Yet the conflict-of-interest issue is not insurmountable, provided frontbenchers adhere to the strict but clear Parliamentary guidelines. Far more pernicious is the perception that too many Tory MPs are only concerned with feathering their own nests rather than reviving the fortunes of their party. Most non-executive roles do not involve a big commitment of time — normally about a day a month — but several directorships and consultancies must detract from frontbench duties. At the same time, the roles are not extensive enough to suggest that frontbenchers may be gaining some valuable insight into the "real world". The increasing professionalisation of both politics and business has made the old model of frontbenchers maintaining a foot in both camps no longer tenable. Over-employed frontbenchers need to decide whether they value their personal income or political careers more highly.

□ The five most highly employed members of the Shadow Cabinet, according to the Parliamentary Register of Members' Interests, of October 20, are:  
Francis Maude, Shadow Chancellor; Non-executive director of Asda Group, Benfield Reinsurance, Garmore Shared Equity Trust and GSET Securities;  
Sir Norman Fowler, Home Affairs chairman of Regional Independent Media Holdings, chairman of Numark, non-executive director Aggregate Industries;  
Michael Howard, Foreign Affairs; Non-executive director of IMPAC, David J Instance and Finex;  
David Willets, Education and Employment; Senior adviser to Monitor Company and economic adviser to Dresdner Kleinwort Benson;  
Iain Duncan Smith, Social Security; Business consultant to Arlen and business consultant Wickstead Engineering.

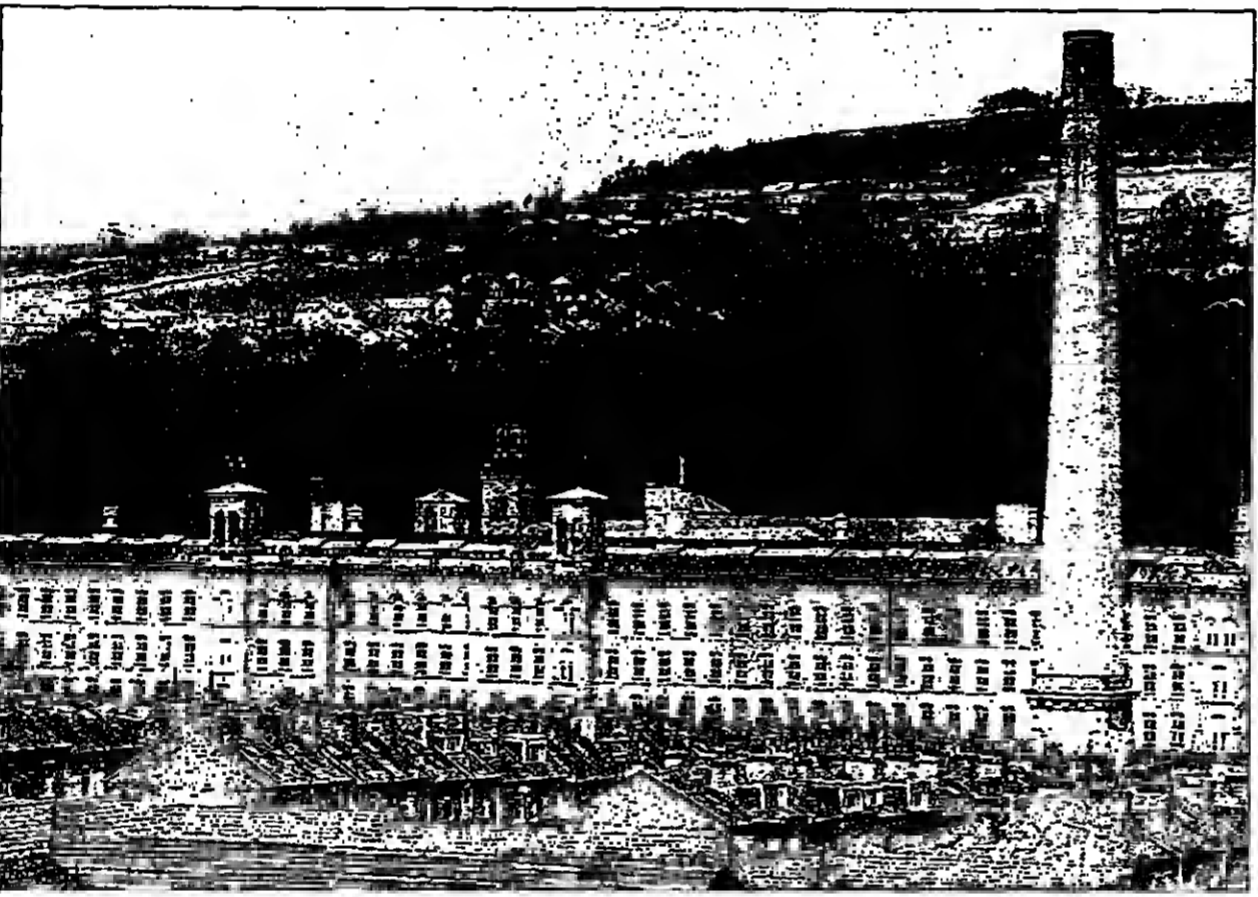


ALASDAIR MURRAY

# Fabric of textile industry woven into new pattern by shake-out

Jason Nissé says evolution will leave Britain with fewer and leaner woollen mills

Salts Mill is one of the most famous tourist attractions in West Yorkshire. Standing solidly in the banks of the Leeds-Liverpool canal, some five miles west of Bradford, the mill was built in the 1850s by Sir Titus Salt, the textile magnate and philanthropist, as part of his attempts to create a humane environment for his workers, many of whom had left the countryside to try to eke a living in the textile mills that were the symbol of Britain's Industrial Revolution.



No cloth has been made at Salts Mill for nearly a decade. It stands as a symbol of the slow death of the British textile industry

But no cloth has been made at Salts Mill for nearly a decade since Drummond Group, which bought Salts of Saltaire from a rival textile firm, Ilwong Morris, closed the factory. The building is now occupied jointly by Pace, the maker of set-top boxes for the new digital television revolution, and an art gallery, dedicated to the work of David Hockney. It stands as a symbol of the slow death of the British textile industry in general, and the Yorkshire woollen industry in particular.

This week three events have symbolised how desperate matters have become. On Wednesday the Transport & General Workers' Union lobbied Parliament, calling for a national strategy to help the textile industry. The T&G says that the industry — which still employs 370,000 in the UK, or 10 per cent of the manufacturing workforce — is shedding 500 jobs a day. "We want lower interest rates and an export campaign in Europe," the T&G said. "We also want more pressure to be placed on retailers to buy clothing made in the UK."

The final point was a dig at Marks & Spencer, which, in addition to its own problems, is being blamed for softening its "buy British" policy and sourcing products from Rabat which it previously would

have bought from Rotherham and from Porto when previously it would have bought from Peterlee. M&S has long been a target for union and industry wrath. At the Labour Party conference, M&S was depicted as a shark eating British jobs. However, under Sir Richard Greenbury, M&S has bowed to economic reality, arguing the customers will not pay a premium for British goods, so why should M&S. Many textile companies have been quick to blame M&S for their difficulties, with suppliers such as Dewhirst, William Baird and Claremont Garments, either stating or hinting that falling orders from the high street's largest retailer were behind factory closures and job losses.

of being taken private. Dawson International, which saw a potential bid for it fall apart earlier this year, and the woolen and worsted side of Allied Textiles, the management of which tried to put together a buyout earlier this year. That deal also fell apart.

The feeling in Yorkshire is that in the future there may be only one company spinning wool and no more than two involved in weaving worsted fabric. This compares with, say, no more than 20 years ago, when there were more than a dozen successful companies in both of those sectors.

According to Mr Hanson, both sectors may have to cut capacity by up to half, with much basic production sourced abroad, in Asia or the former Eastern bloc, and with UK factories specialising, using high technology and stepping up design input and innovation. "It's Darwin's evolution," he said. "We can have a great industry again, but not of the size and shape it is now. It has to be modern and aggressive and can no longer live off its heritage. It is no good sitting here being slaughtered on price and hoping the market will improve."

BUSINESS LETTERS

## It's the management, stupid

From Mr R.S. Piggott  
Sir, When will we learn? For many years British industrial management blamed the trade unions. Mrs Thatcher removed that excuse. We then moved on for a brief period to blame the standard of our graduates, relative to some mythical previous halcyon days when all graduates were deemed to have bordered on the genius. If that is the case, how is it that so many of these "failures" enjoy successful, fulfilling and well-paid careers with foreign employers? More recently we hold interest rates responsible for our industrial woes. To my certain knowledge interest rates have been going up and down since time immemorial. Now we hear the CBI arguing against legislation that will require more information for employees about their employer.

The argument is that this will create unnecessary bureaucracy resulting in a slowdown of market responsiveness. Apparently the legislation is aimed at increasing workers' rights. Now here's a novel idea. Why not tell the workers what your strategies, plans and competitive problems are, not as an increase in the employees' rights, but because it might just help the overall business if all employees, professional and non-professional alike, have some idea of what the company is trying to achieve? As for the bureaucratic argument, it is precisely because our industry is run on bureaucratic lines that we are non-competitive. The fact that vast sums of public money, in various guises, have been thrown at the problem, to little avail, should tell us something. Perhaps we could start by examining the deadly embrace of the boardroom with the City, to the exclusion of the productive staff. A response, by the company, to the marketplace rather than to the share price might just benefit both company and share price. Finally, we might show more faith in our young graduates by freeing up their creativity before the climb up the usual British corporate ladder has exhausted them to the point where there is no longer any motivation to be creative. It is an appalling waste. To summarise the root cause of our industrial problems and demise, we could do worse than paraphrase the current President of the US: "It's the management, stupid!"

## Eurotunnel's capacity to disappoint

From Mr Martin Ancombe  
Sir, When I arrived at the Folkestone Eurotunnel terminal at 11.00 on Friday November 20 a departure of 12.51 was allocated. The call to the ramp came at 13.15 for what transpired to be a 14.12 departure. While I was on the ramp, Eurotunnel News (107.6FM) was heard to inform travellers on the M20 not to bother if they had not pre-booked.

It was intriguing, therefore, to read on the front page of The Times Business section of the same day that Eurotunnel did not expect to reach capacity until 2025. Not much out by time but wildly out by year, it seems. Yours faithfully, MARTIN ANSCOMBE, 2 Harvey Street, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6EP.

## Acting up

THE man in charge of the OFT's cartel-busting SWAT team acquired a taste for drama early in life. Adrian Walker-Smith's first job was as a child actor, a career that lasted until he was 18. The civil servant recalls performing in Noddy in Toy Town in the role of Chief of the Red Goblins.

His expanding team are being trained by Customs and Excise in the art of arriving at a corporate HQ without an appointment. And how to spot the secret price-fixing meetings as you flick through the sales director's desk diary while the chairman looks nervously over your shoulder.



"Oates has gone and he may be some time"

Regrettably, Walker-Smith will miss out on the fun bits of the job. Being a model of probity, the OFT requires that the man in charge keep his distance from the actual investigation. "It is one of my great sadnesses that I cannot go out and knock on doors."



## Sloe, sloe

WHILE Diageo is busy trying to prove that big is best in the drinks industry, one small West Country distiller is proving that small is not so bad, either.

copy of the latest AC Nielsen statistics. "We don't have the money to buy the Nielsen data," admits Charles Rolls, Plymouth managing director.

## Pub crawl

STILL with Diageo: Tony Blair was in almost whimsical mood during yesterday's historic address to both houses of Ireland's Parliament. Recalling childhood summers spent in the countryside of Donegal, he said: "It was there... that my father took me to my first pub, a remote little house in the country, for a Guinness — a taste I've never forgotten and always a pleasure to repeat."

and a bungled succession process combined to leave its fealously guarded reputation in tatters. Also, its retail rival Tesco topped the overall poll to grab the title of the UK's Most Admired Company, leaving M&S trailing in 11th place.

DAVID THOMPSON, the general managing director of Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, was in a playful mood yesterday after launching a hostile £262 million bid for its Midlands rival Marston, Thompson & Evershed. I asked him if he'd had any thoughts about a name for the combined group. "I rather like Marston, Thompson & Evershed," he chortled.

## Top Marks

SOME good news for M&S as it attempts to pick up the pieces. In a survey of 1500 board directors, published yesterday, it was named as the most admired retail store in the land. Unfortunately for M&S the research was carried out over the summer, before poor trading

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£10,000-£24,999	6.70	6.50
£25,000-£49,999	6.75	6.55
£50,000-£99,999	6.85	6.64
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# BBA survey debunks borrowing myths

By RICHARD MILES  
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

A FASCINATING snapshot of people's borrowing habits emerged yesterday when the British Bankers' Association (BBA) produced its first detailed breakdown of the monthly mortgage and consumer credit figures.

The findings of the BBA, the membership of which accounts for about two-thirds of UK lending after the conversion of several building societies last year, appear to kill off some of the more widely propagated myths about people and their money.

Reliance on overdrafts, for example, has waned steadily in recent years, suggesting that the public has woken

up to the often exorbitant cost of this form of borrowing. Four years ago, overdrafts represented 20 per cent of personal lending by banks. Today, that figure is below 13 per cent, as borrowers switch to personal loans.

Perhaps more surprisingly, the BBA figures indicate that most people do not use credit cards to borrow money, another expensive way of obtaining a loan. Instead, they use plastic as an alternative way to pay, settling their bills regularly each month. This past October, for instance, repayments almost entirely offset new credit.

Nor is there any evidence of "distress borrowing" which one might expect against a backdrop of gathering economic gloom, said David

Dooks, the BBA's director of statistics. "Business surveys may show less confidence about the economy, but people do not feel any less confident about their own economic well-being," Mr Dooks said.

The BBA has carried out a similar exercise on its monthly mortgage figures, distinguishing between buyers of new homes and existing borrowers seeking to remortgage their houses. It also identifies those borrowers who want to raise additional money on their property, either to finance home improvements or to tap into the equity locked up in their homes.

Remortgages now account for roughly a third of all new lending in the housing market — 34 per cent by

volume and 31 per cent by value in October — as borrowers seek a better deal in a more competitive market. A year ago remortgage business accounted for less than 16 per cent of the number of home loans granted by banks.

The rapid growth of the remortgage market has taken some lenders by surprise, in particular Halifax, the country's biggest mortgage provider. At the half year, Halifax disclosed that redemptions by borrowers seeking to remortgage elsewhere on more competitive terms, outstripped new loans, leaving the bank with a zero share of net new lending. Halifax has subsequently re-entered the remortgage market with vigour.

Loans for home improvement or

equity release, which have gained in popularity with elderly customers whose sole asset is typically their home, have remained fairly stable as a proportion of total mortgage business, running at about 7 per cent. However, demand for such loans seems highest when the housing market stalls. "It tends to be counter-cyclical to house prices," Mr Dooks said.

The Credit Card Research Group said yesterday that monthly credit and debit card spending topped £10 billion in October for the first time since last Christmas. The group attributed the increase to an unprecedented level of competition in the market, which has helped to push up the number of cards in issue to almost 40 million.

# European Commission raids BPB premises

By CHRIS AYRES

SHARES IN BPB fell 42p to 217p yesterday after the plasterboard manufacturer admitted that several of its offices had been raided by European Commission officials.

The investigation is thought to be into pricing and anti-competitive behaviour in the European plasterboard industry, which is controlled by three large companies: Knauf, of Germany; Lafarge, of France; and BPB, of Britain.

The investigation, which also involves several technical issues, could take up to a year to complete. Jean-Pierre Curry, BPB's chief executive, said yesterday: "BPB is co-operating fully with these inquiries. Until the Commission's investigation is completed, no further statement can be made on this matter."

The Commission investigation almost entirely eclipsed BPB's results, which showed a small rise in pre-tax profits for the six months to September

30 to £89.6 million from £89 million. However, including the cost of closing its Radcliffe mill in Manchester, and its bond-buying exercise, pre-tax profits were £68.6 million.

M Curry said: "Unlike last year, when the second half saw much faster growth in plasterboard volumes than the first, the overall trend of trading now suggests slower growth for the remainder of the year."

"However, the contribution from additional sales volume and greater cost-saving initiatives should broadly offset the effects of continued cost and selling price pressures, and new business development expenditure."

He added that he thought the price of plasterboard would improve, after a period of intense pressure created by the industry's biggest players fighting over market share. "We do not think we have lost market share," he said.

Sales at the company fell nearly 2 per cent from £638 million to £647 million, while earnings per share rose slightly from 11.5p to 11.6p. An interim dividend of 4p will be paid in April.

M Curry said BPB was looking to expand into Asia, and that it had up to £200 million to spend on acquisitions, with the aim of developing complementary products.

BPB said it still planned to go ahead with its share buy-back programme, but added that it did not know what percentage of stock it would purchase. It has permission from shareholders to buy back up to 10 per cent of its shares.



Geoff Gibson, finance director, left, and Martin Buckley regard exceptional costs as the short-term price for being growth-led

# Underlying fall at Waddington

By MATTHEW BARBOUR

WADDINGTON, the packaging and printing company, suffered a fall in underlying profits and turnover in the first half, but said that it remained confident about its ability to withstand difficult trading conditions.

In the six months to October 3 profits before exceptional charges fell to £16.3 million from £17.1 million on turnover of £165.1 million, down from £169.8 million.

Martin Buckley, chief executive, said: "We are never going to be a totally risk-free business. We are anxious to grow and exceptional costs are the short-term price for being forward-looking and growth-led."

The sale of businesses over the past six months, including last month's sale of European Cartons for £67.5 million, gave rise to a gross profit of £20.8 million. The consequent

writeback of goodwill of £28.2 million resulted in an exceptional loss of £7.4 million, reducing pre-tax profits to £8.9 million from £17.1 million in the first half of the previous year.

Net borrowings have been reduced from £71.5 million to £4 million and gearing has fallen from 70 per cent to 3 per cent.

Sales in the pharmaceutical packaging division rose to

£28.1 million (£20.4 million) as a result of organic growth and the impact of recent acquisitions in the US. Sales in the specialist printing division fell to £49 million (£52.4 million) with operating profits broadly maintained at £6 million (£5.9 million).

Adjusted earnings were 11.75p a share (11.74p). The interim dividend is lifted to 5p a share from 4.7p. The shares fell 11p to 181p.



Curry: prices will improve

Tempus, page 32

## BUSINESS

### Northern Electric suffers charges

NORTHERN ELECTRIC, the regional electricity company that is owned by America's CalEnergy, suffered a fall in pre-tax profits to £40.7 million from a restated £57.5 million in the six months to September 30. The results were adversely affected by costs of £15 million linked to the introduction of competition in the gas and electricity markets and a restructuring charge of £3 million. Interest charges were also higher as a result of the £118 million payment in December 1997. The first instalment of the windfall tax levied on utilities. The final instalment is due in the second half of this year.

Northern's turnover in the first half rose to £490.4 million from a restated £477.1 million. Gregory Abel, the president and chief operating officer, said that although one-off costs had been incurred to strengthen the company's market position, the underlying trading performance had improved "significantly" over the previous year.

### LMS pegs payout

LONDON MERCHANT SECURITIES, the property and venture capital investor, announced an 11.9 per cent rise in operating profits to £16.7 million for the six months to September 30. Pre-tax profit was £35.1 million, boosted by the £18.8 million sale of an investment in Six Flags Entertainment Corporation. Interim pre-tax profits of £69 million last year also benefited from a large exceptional sale. Earnings were 5.16p a share before capital items, against 5.1p, and 10.84p in total (28.29p). The dividend stays at 0.9p. LMS investments suffered because of falls in the share prices of First Leisure and Weatherford International.

### CPL disappoints

SHARES OF CPL Aromas, the fragrance and flavours company, dropped 134p to 934p yesterday on the announcement of interim results that the chairman admitted were disappointing. David Hankinson said the fragrance division had experienced difficulties, and that "trading conditions are likely to remain unsettled for the remainder of the year". CPL made a pre-tax profit of £900,000 in the six months to September 30, down from £1.4 million last time, on turnover that was unchanged at £17.9 million. Earnings fell to 4.8p a share from 7.4p. The interim dividend is maintained at 1.9p a share.

### DBS to consolidate

DBS MANAGEMENT, the business services group that includes the UK's largest network of independent financial advisers, yesterday said it was going to be a year of consolidation as it reported that pre-tax profit, before exceptional, had fallen to £4.2 million (£4.9 million) for the six months to September 30. The company said: "Trading conditions have been somewhat more difficult than anticipated." Turnover increased 7 per cent to £77.5 million. Earnings per share were 6.3p (0.6p) and the company declared an interim dividend of 1.65p (1.4p).

### Latchways advances

LATCHWAYS, the supplier of safety equipment, raised interim pre-tax profits to £1.1 million from £400,000 in the six months to September 30. Turnover increased to £3.2 million from £2.1 million. The company has installed safety equipment at the Millennium Dome in London and on the Sydney Harbour bridge. Earnings were 7.23p a share, compared with 3.17p, and there is a maiden interim dividend of 2.5p a share. The shares, which floated on the stock market last year, rose 5p to 295p yesterday.

### Symonds warning

SYMONDS, the electronics manufacturer, announced yesterday that it had so far overtaken "a number of commercial challenges" this year, but said that difficulties would continue. Pre-tax profits for the six months to September 30 were £2.2 million, compared with a loss of £84,000 caused by exceptional charges last time, on turnover of £23.8 million (£20.5 million). Earnings were 2.2p a share (loss of 0.5p) and an unchanged dividend of 0.6p was declared. Rod Ackrill, the chairman, said market conditions were likely to remain difficult.

### Dawson rises by 12%

DAWSON HOLDINGS, the newspaper and magazine wholesaler that moved to a full listing on the stock exchange last June, reported pre-tax profit up 12 per cent to £12.8 million, before exceptional, for the year to September 30. The company said it had successfully integrated the UK wholesale interests of Johnsons News Group, which it bought in January for £32 million. The acquisition lifted turnover by 24 per cent to £738 million. Earnings per share were 13.3p (10.9p) and a final dividend of 3.1p makes the total for the year 10.3p, up 10.4 per cent.

### Syltone ahead 36%

SYLTONE, the transport engineering group, said it expected steady growth over the second half as it reported pre-tax profits up 36 per cent to £2.72 million for the six months to September 30. However, the company said there were signs in the UK that forward order books were being affected by the overall business climate. Turnover was up 15 per cent to £45.26 million. Earnings per share were 0.61p (5.13p) and the interim dividend is 2.25p (2.1p). The results included a first full contribution from Venlo, the tank truck equipment maker.

### Comino boosts profits

COMINO, a supplier of software-based business solutions, yesterday reported profit up from £830,000 to £1.27 million for the six months to September 30. Turnover was £8.72 million, up from £8.05 million. Earnings per share were 7.24p (5.3p) and the company's maiden interim dividend is 1.25p. Comino said that in addition to "solid organic growth", the results reflected acquisitions made during the course of last year. It added that growth was "not dependent on any aspect of millennium business".

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CHANGING TIMES

# First-half loss results in dividend cut by Regalian

By MATTHEW BARBOUR

REGALIAN PROPERTIES, the upmarket property developer, has cut its interim dividend after incurring a £279,000 loss in the first half, compared with a pre-tax profit of £2.2 million in the first half of the previous year.

The interim dividend is reduced to 0.25p a share from 0.475p. The company said it expected to make a profit in the second half, but restated a previous warning that full-year profits would not match the £6.7 million earned in the previous 12 months.

David Goldstone, the chairman, said: "As we warned at the company's AGM earlier this year, the construction of



Goldstone still confident

West and Chelsea Gate projects in the second half.

In the last recession Regalian suffered when it was left holding hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of expensive property that could not be sold. Warns that Regalian could suffer from the fallout of the Far East economic crisis have resurfaced recently. But Mr Goldstone said he was confident that domestic demand for London property is strong enough to compensate for any downturn in Asian demand.

The Point West development in Kensington has attracted substantial interest, with 202 of the 267 apartments now either completed, exchanged or reserved.

# Caledonia boosted by disposal figure of £61m

By RICHARD MILES

A PROFIT from disposals of £61 million helped Caledonia Investments, the diversified trading and investment company, to boost half-year pre-tax profits by more than 360 per cent to £81.2 million.

However, the one-off gains masked a slight decline in Caledonia's underlying business. Operating profits for the six months to September 30 fell by 13 per cent to £20.1 million, largely reflecting a drop in equity values during the period.

Peter Buckley, chairman, said Caledonia had amassed cash of £106 million from disposals, which included the

sale of Abacus, the self-storage business, and a reduction from 25 to 21 per cent of its holding in Close Brothers, the investment bank.

The disposals, by a group that in the past has been reluctant to sell its investments, has left Caledonia with 30 per cent of its assets in cash. Mr Buckley said the strong cash position left the company well-placed against a "world economic outlook which remains very uncertain".

Caledonia attributed the fall in operating profits to the performance of subsidiaries such as Exco, the finance house,

which has merged with the holding company of Inter-capital, and London Furlfing, the trade finance firm.

Caledonia has since raised its stake in Close Brothers to 21 per cent. Abacus, built up over ten years, realised a capital profit of £30 million. Caledonia also sold its warrants in the English & Scottish Investors trust for £9 million.

Earnings per share, after adjustment for the disposals, slipped to 15.5p from 17.9p in the same period last year. Caledonia will still pay an increased interim dividend of 7.0p (6.5p) on January 14.

HOLMESDALE BUILDING SOCIETY			
NEW RATES FROM 1ST DECEMBER 1998			
NEW MEMBERS MUST RESIDE IN ENGLAND AND INVEST & MAINTAIN A MINIMUM BALANCE OF £2,500			
	GROSS GROSS		GROSS GROSS
SPECIAL SAVINGS	"CAR"	REGULAR SAVINGS	"CAR"
£100,000 or more	7.45	£50 minimum per month	6.15
£75,000 or more	7.20	INSTANT ACCESS	
£50,000 or more	6.95	£10,000 or more	5.95
£25,000 or more	6.70	£ 2,500 or more	5.85
£10,000 or more	6.45	OVERSEAS RESIDENTS	
£ 500 or more	6.20	(CHARITIES A/C CLOSED)	
MONTHLY INCOME		£10,000 or more	6.65
£25,000 or more	6.75	£ 5,000 or more	6.45
£10,000 or more	6.50	£ 2,500 or more	6.25
£ 2,500 or more	6.25	SHARE ACCOUNTS	
TRUST SAVINGS		Investment Withdrawals up to £20,000	1.85
£25,000 or more	6.25	TERESA	
£10,000 or more	6.00	£50 Minimum	1.45
£ 2,500 or more	5.75		
£ 500 or more	5.50		

\*CAR = Compounded Annual Rate  
Member of the Building Societies Association  
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THE TIMES FRIDAY

## Allianz set to achieve record profits

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN FRANKFURT

ALLIANZ Europe's latest estimates for 1998 show it is on track to reach record profits and reach new heights in the financial markets and special financial markets. The company's results are particularly impressive as they reflect a year when the market has been particularly volatile.

The German company expects 1998 profits to grow by 10 per cent worldwide, with a 20 per cent increase in the first half of the year. In 1997, Allianz reported a net profit of DM2.5 billion on premium income of DM5.8 billion.

In the first nine months of 1998, premium income rose by 12 per cent to DM7.6 billion, largely due to the consolidation of AGF, the French insurance group, taken over earlier in the year.

AGF contributed DM2.2 billion marks of premium income to Allianz's results and is expected to boost last year's premium income by DM1.5 billion.

Property and casualty insurance accounted for DM4.9 billion of the nine-month figure, while life and health insurance generated the rest.

The results were in line with expectations and the market showed little reaction to the announcement, with Allianz shares up 2.14 per cent to DM166.45, following a 2.1 per cent rise in the blue-chip Dax index.

Analysts, who had been expecting Allianz to meet its own earnings and premium income goals, said the group now faced little risk of missing the target after financial markets recovered from their early October lull.

"Overall claims experienced a slight upward trend caused by extraordinary natural events such as the ice storm in Canada and Hurricane Georges," May said, adding that "renewal insurance claims in Germany contributed to the increase."

Drop in value companies

By ROBERT COLE

The falling value of small companies has affected Sir George's holding venture and investment capital firm. The company's net asset value fell by 10p to 25p a share in the six months to September 30.

However, Sir George's chairman, said the downward movement had knocked half of the average worth of all unquoted companies and presented it with limited investment opportunities. He also said that it had managed the previous high valuations by holding back from making new ones.

Shares in 3 were the best performing of the top 100 companies yesterday, rising more than 10 per cent to 59p.

The falling market value of such company shares had an adverse impact on 3's net asset value because the company's portfolio, which comprises 3,000 different investments with reference to the price/earnings multiple of publicly listed small company shares.

The multiple used at the end of September, the close of 3's most recent accounting period, was 31 per cent higher at 11.3.

However, 3 said that the expected return on its investment.

Sir George

By JASON NISSE

OMNICOM, the US marketing services company, yesterday said it is in talks to acquire Mead Vickers, London's largest outdoor advertising agency in which Omnicom already has a 27 per cent stake.

The deal is likely to value AMV shares at between £25 and 45p, compared with 15p today. This would place a price tag of £150 million on AMV and give Omnicom at least £100,000 each for up to 100,000 shares.

The chairman, led by Peter Mead, said Omnicom is also likely to pick up other agencies as it takes over. On the list of agencies are outstanding earnings of nearly £50 million over

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Allianz set to achieve record profits

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN FRANKFURT

ALLIANZ, Europe's largest insurance group, said it was on track to reach record profits and sales this year despite turbulent financial markets and spectacular natural disasters that raised claims costs.

The German company expects double-digit profits growth this year, with worldwide premium income reaching DM106 billion (£37.5 million), a 24 per cent increase over 1997.

In 1997 Allianz earned a net profit of DM2.7 billion on premium income of DM85.6 billion.

In the first nine months of 1998 premium income rose by 18.7 per cent to DM76 billion, largely due to the consolidation of AGF, the French insurer taken over earlier this year.

AGF contributed DM12 billion marks of premium income to the nine-month results and is expected to boost full 1998 premium income by DM18 billion.

Property and casualty insurance accounted for DM44.9 billion of the nine-month figure, while life and health insurance generated the rest.

The results were in line with expectations and the market showed little reaction to the announcement, with Allianz shares up 2.18 per cent to DM606.45, mirroring a 2.1 per cent rise in the blue-chip Dax index.

Analysts, who had been expecting Allianz to meet its own earnings and premium income goals, said the group now faced little risk of missing the target after financial markets recovered from their early October lull.

"Overall claims experienced a slight upward trend caused by extraordinary natural events such as the ice storm in Canada and Hurricane Georges," Allianz said, adding that industrial insurance claims in Germany contributed to the increase.



Soup Works, a take-away chain that claims to provide "a lunchtime alternative with the strength to challenge the supremacy of the sandwich", opens its first restaurant in D'Arbury Street, Soho, next Monday. The Ofex-listed company, whose managing director is restaurateur Bruce Isaacs, above, plans to set up the chain of "fast soup" outlets across London, which will offer a delivery service that will take orders via the Internet.

Yorkshire fears water price cuts will reduce payouts

By ADAM JONES

YORKSHIRE WATER yesterday gave warning that its dividend growth will be held back by price cuts proposed by its regulator, Ofwat.

Although Yorkshire is confident that it can increase the annual payment to shareholders by 6 to 8 per cent above inflation until 2000, it admits that dividend growth will slow

after that whatever form the pricing review finally takes. Ofwat has suggested a 15 to 20 per cent cut in average household bills for Yorkshire's customers in 2000. Like other water supply companies, Yorkshire is arguing that the regulator has underestimated what it will have to pay to finance its investment programme.

Kevin Bond, chief executive, said Yorkshire would continue to negotiate quietly with Ofwat. "The way to tackle this is not through megaphone diplomacy," he said. "We think that what the regulator has put forward is extremely challenging. We would want clarification on a number of issues."

Customers did not want a big cut in bills followed by big rises in later years, he said. Faced with Ofwat's tough stance, Yorkshire said yesterday that it wants to draw 50 per cent of revenue and about 15 per cent of profits from non-regulated businesses, such as recycling and rubbish collection, by 2005.

The group was reporting pre-tax profits of £118 million for the first six months of the year, up from interim profits of £115.7 million last year. Turnover rose from £322.5 million to £340.4 million; 14.1 per cent of this came from unregulated activities, down from 14.6 per cent in the 1997 first half, but organic and acquisitive growth is still filtering in.

Yorkshire merged its dry and liquid waste management operations with those of Waste Recycling Group in August. The integration of the two businesses will continue in the second half. Yorkshire has also bought 3C Waste, a Cheshire waste disposal company.

Mr Bond said that, despite the desire of most water utilities to buy environmental management companies, competition for new acquisitions is not too restrictive. "It's a huge marketplace," he said. He said that Yorkshire sometimes came up against one or two other water companies when it was looking to buy a waste management company or a similar enterprise.

Earnings per share were 30.2p, up from a loss of 8.3p last year, when the windfall tax was paid. An interim dividend of 14.7p (13.2p) per share will be paid on April 6, 1999.

Interim earnings per share fell from 64p to 61.3p before exceptional. An interim dividend of 14.7p (13.2p) per share will be paid on April 6, 1999.

Profits from the core South West Water business fell nearly £5 million after it absorbed an increased interest charge. South West has been threatened with a price cut of 15-20 per cent in 2000 by Ofwat, the regulator, which issued its Prospects for Prices consultation document recently.

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Pennon sets sights on expansion

By ADAM JONES

PENNON, the water supply and waste management group formerly known as South West Water, is hungry for acquisitions to reduce its vulnerability to tough regulatory reviews (Adam Jones writes).

Ken Hill, finance director, refused to say how much was earmarked for deals but said Pennon was prepared to see gearing rise to 100 per cent. At the end of this year, it is likely to be about 75 per cent.

Pennon wants non-regulated businesses to account for 50 per cent of turnover within the next two or three years. Through its Haul Waste subsidiary, Pennon is already the biggest operator of landfill sites in the UK.

In the interim results published yesterday, 38 per cent of the £220.2 million group turnover came from unregulated sources, despite the Asian financial crisis affecting its instru-

mentation business, whose products include testing equipment for soil and concrete. Pre-tax profits for the first half of the year were £71.5 million, up from £68 million. However, were it not for a £5 million exceptional credit resulting from settlement of a waste management legal claim, the year-on-year comparison would have shown a fall.

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Drop in value of small companies knocks 3i

By ROBERT COLE, CITY CORRESPONDENT

THE falling value of small companies has affected 3i Britain's leading venture and development capital firm. The company's net asset value fell 9 per cent to 52p a share in the six months to September 30.

However, Sir George Russell, chairman, said the downward movement had knocked 3i off the average worth of small unquoted companies and presented 3i with improved investment opportunities. He also said that 3i had recognised the previous high valuations by crystallising investments and holding back from making new ones.

Shares in 3i were the best performing of the top 100 companies yesterday, rising more than 10 per cent to 590p.

The falling market value of small company shares had an adverse impact on 3i's net asset value because the company values its portfolio, which comprises 3,000 different companies, with reference to the price/earnings multiple of publicly listed small company shares.

The multiple used at the end of September, the close of 3i's interim accounting period, was eight times. In March it was 30 per cent higher at 11.3 times.

However, 3i said that the negative return on its invest-

ments of 9 per cent compared favourably with the 15 per cent fall in the FTSE All-share index and a 24 per cent decline in the FTSE Small Cap index. The Small Cap index measures the share price performance of most companies outside the top 350.

The profits before tax — made up of interest and dividend income, and fund management fees — rose 19 per cent to £84.6 million.

The company also published results of a quarterly survey which showed business confidence continuing at a low ebb. It surveys managers of companies in which it invests on a quarterly basis. In June the poll showed a sharp slump and the latest figure showed it to have worsened. But the rate of decline was slower, prompting 3i to suggest that the fall-off was bottoming out.

Tempus, page 32



Sir George Russell said 3i had crystallised investments

Devro hit by fresh warning

By OUR CITY STAFF

SHARES of Devro fell sharply yesterday after the sausage casings company issued another profits warning.

The company said underlying pre-tax profits were now likely to be about £40 million in the current year, down from £58 million in the previous 12 months. Analysts' forecasts, downgraded in the summer after the first warning, had expected profits of about £53 million. The shares, which traded at 545p in May, fell 36p to 199p yesterday.

Devro blamed economic difficulties in Eastern Europe, particularly Russia, although the impact was now spreading to other markets. It is cutting back production of cellulose casings at Danville in the US and Lommel in Belgium.

US profits are now expected to be £5 million below the September estimates, with European profits affected to a similar degree. The company also expects to increase inventory and had debt provisions by about £2 million.

Devro has already begun to cut costs and will make a £4 million charge against redundancies. Restructuring is expected to yield annual savings of up to £7 million from 2000. The group expects to maintain the total dividend at 9.5p.

Omnicom set to acquire AMV

By JASON NISSE

OMNICOM, the US marketing services company, yesterday said it is in talks to buy Abbott Mead Vickers, London's most successful advertising agency in which Omnicom already has a 27 per cent stake.

The deal is likely to value AMV shares at between 425p and 450p, compared with a price that rose 48p to 408p yesterday. This would place a price tag of up to £340 million on AMV and give a bonus of at least £100,000 each for up to 70 AMV staff.

AMV's directors, led by Peter Mead, the chairman, are also likely to pick up about £12 million from the takeover. On top of this there are outstanding earn out payments of nearly £50 million ow-

ing on a series of acquisitions made by AMV in the past couple of years, largely of design and public relations firms.

The move is seen as further strengthening Omnicom's dominance of the UK marketing services market. Earlier this year it paid £150 million for GGT Group, a deal which left it with two advertising networks in the UK — TWBA Simmons Palmer and BMP Needham. After the deal AMV will be known as BBDO Abbott Mead Vickers, formalising a link which was first forged in 1992 when Omnicom bought its stake in AMV.

Omnicom has said it has no problems running parallel advertising networks without clients worrying about conflicts of interest among the different advertising agencies.

The deal comes at an interesting time for AMV, which is known in the industry for its success with BT's "It's good to talk" campaign.

Two years ago it became the largest agency in London, overtaking J Walter Thompson, where Mr Mead started his career, and Saatchi & Saatchi.

However, in the summer David Abbott, one of the founders of the company, announced his retirement and the group's shares were affected by worries about future earnings from advertising and fell to a low of 248p.

Despite this, the agency is still seen by rivals as one of the most creative houses in London. Its client list includes Volvo, the RSPCA, J Sainsbury, Mars and Guinness.

Cartel-busters given greater powers by change in law

By CARL MORTSHED

A NEW government has given the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) extraordinary powers of search and seizure which will be set in motion on British business. The Office of Fair Trading is doubling the size of its Cartels Task Force which will acquire new powers under the Competition Act to break into premises, seize documents and impose huge fines.

The OFT is launching a campaign to warn businesses of the dangers that they face if they engage in price-fixing, squeezing out competitors and rigging markets.

John Bridgeman, Director-General of Fair Trading, said yesterday that in the past the OFT was unable to obtain evidence to stop cartels. The new Act, which comes into force in March 2000, gives the OFT similar powers to the European Commission. The Commission's investigators can already drop in uninvited at the UK offices of multinationals in search of incriminating documents.

Mr Bridgeman said: "It took 13 years for us to bring a cement cartel to book. All it will take now is one whistleblower and we will be able to act. We expect to be able to destroy cartels in weeks or months rather than years."

The OFT has produced a mini-drama on video about a fictional investigation. Actors portraying grim-faced OFT investigators arrive uninvited at an office, slam their briefcases on the receptionist's desk and demand to see the chairman. They eventually unearth evidence in diaries of a price-fixing meeting held at a golf tournament.

Lawyers are leaping at the opportunity to educate clients to the dangers. Cameron McKenna has produced a "Dawn Raid Response Pack". Richard Taylor, a partner, reckons the UK Act gives the OFT even greater powers than the European Commission. "It has not been possible for the OFT to use force to gain access."

Big UK companies already train their staff, including receptionists, how to respond to raids by the Commission in order to avoid investigators prowling through the building like unguided missiles.

Mr Bridgeman said there would be a big incentive for people to rat on cartels. The legislation treats whistle-blowing as a mitigating circumstance. Based on EU competition law, the new Act prohibits agreements that distort competition and activity that abuses a company's position, which is broadly defined as a market share of 40 per cent or more.

City Diary, page 33

Ransom slides to 5-year low

By MATTHEW BARBOUR

SHARES in William Ransom, the toiletries and cosmetics company, yesterday slumped to a five-year low after it reported a fall in first-half profits caused by turbulent Far East markets and the strong pound.

William Ransom, chairman, also gave warning that third-quarter trading suggests second-half results would also be affected by weak exports.

Ransom shares, which reached a high of 83p earlier this year, fell 5p to 39p.

Before exceptional, pre-tax profits fell to £330,000 in the six months to the end of September from £427,000 on turnover down 8.5 per cent to £4.4 million. Adjusted earnings fell to 1.45p a share from 1.86p. The interim dividend is maintained at 0.89p.

William Ransom supplies natural extracts supplied to customers such as Body Shop, herbal ingredients for health drinks and bitters used in the making of alopecops.

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Vertical advertisements on the right margin including 'ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES', 'BANKS', 'BREWERS, PUBS & REST', 'BUILDING MATERIALS', 'CHEMICALS', and 'CONSTRUCTION'.

Advertisement for 'Do a good deal better' with 'Share Dealing Services' and contact information for 013 243 0800.

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# Equities and gilts surge ahead

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
111	Alco	11.25	+0.10	18.5
112	Bev	10.50	+0.05	15.2
113	Dist	12.10	+0.15	20.1
114	Wine	9.80	+0.08	14.8
115	Whisky	11.50	+0.12	17.5
116	Brewery	13.20	+0.18	22.3
117	Spirits	10.90	+0.09	16.7
118	Beer	11.80	+0.11	18.2
119	Wine & Spirits	12.50	+0.16	19.8
120	Distillers	10.20	+0.07	15.5

## BANKS

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
121	Bank of Scotland	15.20	+0.20	12.5
122	Barclays	14.80	+0.18	12.1
123	HSBC	13.50	+0.15	11.8
124	First Direct	12.10	+0.12	10.5
125	First National	11.80	+0.11	10.2
126	First State	10.50	+0.09	9.8
127	First Tower	9.20	+0.07	8.5
128	First Western	8.80	+0.06	8.2
129	First Yorkshire	7.50	+0.05	7.8
130	First City	6.20	+0.04	6.5

## BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
131	Bev	10.50	+0.05	15.2
132	Dist	12.10	+0.15	20.1
133	Wine	9.80	+0.08	14.8
134	Whisky	11.50	+0.12	17.5
135	Brewery	13.20	+0.18	22.3
136	Spirits	10.90	+0.09	16.7
137	Beer	11.80	+0.11	18.2
138	Wine & Spirits	12.50	+0.16	19.8
139	Distillers	10.20	+0.07	15.5
140	Public Houses	14.50	+0.22	13.5

## BUILDING MATERIALS

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
141	Aggregates	12.50	+0.15	18.5
142	Bricks	11.80	+0.12	17.2
143	Concrete	13.20	+0.18	19.8
144	Timber	10.50	+0.08	15.5
145	Plaster	9.80	+0.07	14.2
146	Roofing	11.20	+0.10	16.5
147	Windows	10.80	+0.09	16.0
148	Doors	9.50	+0.06	14.5
149	Paints	11.50	+0.11	17.0
150	Lighting	10.20	+0.07	15.2

## CHEMICALS

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
151	Allyl	11.50	+0.12	17.5
152	Acryl	10.80	+0.10	16.2
153	Ammonia	12.20	+0.16	18.8
154	Asphalt	11.80	+0.14	17.5
155	Butane	10.50	+0.08	15.2
156	Calcium	11.20	+0.10	16.5
157	Chlorine	12.80	+0.18	19.5
158	Coal	11.50	+0.12	17.2
159	Composites	10.20	+0.07	15.5
160	Corrosion	11.80	+0.14	17.0

## CONSTRUCTION

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
161	Adm	11.50	+0.12	17.5
162	Arch	10.80	+0.10	16.2
163	Asst	12.20	+0.16	18.8
164	Asst	11.80	+0.14	17.5
165	Asst	10.50	+0.08	15.2
166	Asst	11.20	+0.10	16.5
167	Asst	12.80	+0.18	19.5
168	Asst	11.50	+0.12	17.2
169	Asst	10.20	+0.07	15.5
170	Asst	11.80	+0.14	17.0

## DISTRIBUTORS

## FOOD MANUFACTURERS

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
171	Food	10.50	+0.05	15.2
172	Food	12.10	+0.15	20.1
173	Food	9.80	+0.08	14.8
174	Food	11.50	+0.12	17.5
175	Food	13.20	+0.18	22.3
176	Food	10.90	+0.09	16.7
177	Food	11.80	+0.11	18.2
178	Food	12.50	+0.16	19.8
179	Food	10.20	+0.07	15.5
180	Food	11.50	+0.12	17.2

## HEALTHCARE

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
181	Health	11.50	+0.12	17.5
182	Health	10.80	+0.10	16.2
183	Health	12.20	+0.16	18.8
184	Health	11.80	+0.14	17.5
185	Health	10.50	+0.08	15.2
186	Health	11.20	+0.10	16.5
187	Health	12.80	+0.18	19.5
188	Health	11.50	+0.12	17.2
189	Health	10.20	+0.07	15.5
190	Health	11.80	+0.14	17.0

## HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
191	Home	10.50	+0.05	15.2
192	Home	12.10	+0.15	20.1
193	Home	9.80	+0.08	14.8
194	Home	11.50	+0.12	17.5
195	Home	13.20	+0.18	22.3
196	Home	10.90	+0.09	16.7
197	Home	11.80	+0.11	18.2
198	Home	12.50	+0.16	19.8
199	Home	10.20	+0.07	15.5
200	Home	11.50	+0.12	17.2

## INSURANCE

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
201	Insur	11.50	+0.12	17.5
202	Insur	10.80	+0.10	16.2
203	Insur	12.20	+0.16	18.8
204	Insur	11.80	+0.14	17.5
205	Insur	10.50	+0.08	15.2
206	Insur	11.20	+0.10	16.5
207	Insur	12.80	+0.18	19.5
208	Insur	11.50	+0.12	17.2
209	Insur	10.20	+0.07	15.5
210	Insur	11.80	+0.14	17.0

## INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
211	Inv	10.50	+0.05	15.2
212	Inv	12.10	+0.15	20.1
213	Inv	9.80	+0.08	14.8
214	Inv	11.50	+0.12	17.5
215	Inv	13.20	+0.18	22.3
216	Inv	10.90	+0.09	16.7
217	Inv	11.80	+0.11	18.2
218	Inv	12.50	+0.16	19.8
219	Inv	10.20	+0.07	15.5
220	Inv	11.50	+0.12	17.2

## MEDIA

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
221	Media	11.50	+0.12	17.5
222	Media	10.80	+0.10	16.2
223	Media	12.20	+0.16	18.8
224	Media	11.80	+0.14	17.5
225	Media	10.50	+0.08	15.2
226	Media	11.20	+0.10	16.5
227	Media	12.80	+0.18	19.5
228	Media	11.50	+0.12	17.2
229	Media	10.20	+0.07	15.5
230	Media	11.80	+0.14	17.0

## LEISURE & HOTELS

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
231	Leisure	10.50	+0.05	15.2
232	Leisure	12.10	+0.15	20.1
233	Leisure	9.80	+0.08	14.8
234	Leisure	11.50	+0.12	17.5
235	Leisure	13.20	+0.18	22.3
236	Leisure	10.90	+0.09	16.7
237	Leisure	11.80	+0.11	18.2
238	Leisure	12.50	+0.16	19.8
239	Leisure	10.20	+0.07	15.5
240	Leisure	11.50	+0.12	17.2

## Mining

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
241	Mining	11.50	+0.12	17.5
242	Mining	10.80	+0.10	16.2
243	Mining	12.20	+0.16	18.8
244	Mining	11.80	+0.14	17.5
245	Mining	10.50	+0.08	15.2
246	Mining	11.20	+0.10	16.5
247	Mining	12.80	+0.18	19.5
248	Mining	11.50	+0.12	17.2
249	Mining	10.20	+0.07	15.5
250	Mining	11.80	+0.14	17.0

## Oil & Gas

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
251	Oil	10.50	+0.05	15.2
252	Oil	12.10	+0.15	20.1
253	Oil	9.80	+0.08	14.8
254	Oil	11.50	+0.12	17.5
255	Oil	13.20	+0.18	22.3
256	Oil	10.90	+0.09	16.7
257	Oil	11.80	+0.11	18.2
258	Oil	12.50	+0.16	19.8
259	Oil	10.20	+0.07	15.5
260	Oil	11.50	+0.12	17.2

## Other Financial

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
261	Other	10.50	+0.05	15.2
262	Other	12.10	+0.15	20.1
263	Other	9.80	+0.08	14.8
264	Other	11.50	+0.12	17.5
265	Other	13.20	+0.18	22.3
266	Other	10.90	+0.09	16.7
267	Other	11.80	+0.11	18.2
268	Other	12.50	+0.16	19.8
269	Other	10.20	+0.07	15.5
270	Other	11.50	+0.12	17.2

## Pharmaceuticals

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
271	Pharm	11.50	+0.12	17.5
272	Pharm	10.80	+0.10	16.2
273	Pharm	12.20	+0.16	18.8
274	Pharm	11.80	+0.14	17.5
275	Pharm	10.50	+0.08	15.2
276	Pharm	11.20	+0.10	16.5
277	Pharm	12.80	+0.18	19.5
278	Pharm	11.50	+0.12	17.2
279	Pharm	10.20	+0.07	15.5
280	Pharm	11.80	+0.14	17.0

## RETAILERS: FOOD

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
281	Retail	10.50	+0.05	15.2
282	Retail	12.10	+0.15	20.1
283	Retail	9.80	+0.08	14.8
284	Retail	11.50	+0.12	17.5
285	Retail	13.20	+0.18	22.3
286	Retail	10.90	+0.09	16.7
287	Retail	11.80	+0.11	18.2
288	Retail	12.50	+0.16	19.8
289	Retail	10.20	+0.07	15.5
290	Retail	11.50	+0.12	17.2

## PRINTING & PAPER

Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
291	Print	10.50	+0.05	15.2
292	Print	12.10	+0.15	20.1
293	Print	9.80	+0.08	14.8
294	Print	11.50	+0.12	17.5
295	Print	13.20	+0.18	22.3
296	Print	10.90	+0.09	16.7
297	Print	11.80	+0.11	18.2
298	Print	12.50	+0.16	19.8
299	Print	10.20	+0.07	15.5
300	Print	11.50	+0.12	17.2

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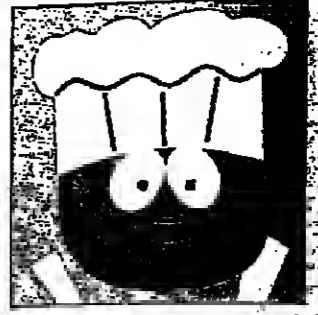
Code	Company Name	Price	% Chg	PE
301	Prop	11.50	+0.12	17.5
302	Prop	10.80	+0.10	16.2
303	Prop	12.20	+0.16	18.8
304	Prop	11.80	+0.14	17.5
305	Prop	10.50	+0.08	15.2
306</				

POP Jools Holland: the man who does everything PAGE 20



THE TIMES ARTS

POP Is comedy really the new rock'n'roll? PAGE 41



Singing lesson from a soprano



All together now at ENO: from left, Christopher Maltman, Toby Spence, Mark Beesley, Claire Weston, Lesley Garrett and (front) Gordon Sandison

It is probably a good thing that Jonathan Miller couldn't come to revive his 11-year-old Barber production...

OPERA Barber of Seville Coliseum

a serious aria was near sent-up by the comic business that has to be part of the scene. Garrett was reviving an age-old tradition: a previous Coliseum Rosina sang the whole finale of La donna del lago...

to our loss. Beautifully pure tone, sound technique (lots of graceful decorations in repeats), robust comic gifts and wonder of wonders — every consonant slotted neatly into the vocal lines...

This was true of the whole cast: ENO has twiggled after too long an interval that the "E" is their most significant initial. They not only enunciated the sprightly Holden translation clearly...

conducting (the cast kept trying to nudge him on), compromised two important debuts by new company principals. Christopher Maltman (Figaro), Cardiff Singer of the World Leader Prize winner, has a fine voice but was plainly nervous...

cherous opening aria with impressive neatness; his tenor is not huge, but he is naturally musical and a lively stage animal. Both could give a finer showing with firmer musical guidance and the attentions of a director.

But this is a lively revival: he who is tired of the Barber is truly tired of life, and I'm not. RODNEY MILNES

NEW YORK MUSICALS: A 1960s favourite revived, the French Revolution revisited and a Grease for the 1990s

The energy unleashed by Martin Short in the Roundabout Theatre Company's production of Little Me ought to convince the people who name hurricanes to avoid a Martin for everyone's good...

Clown who steals the show

fuddled Fred Poitrine, a near-blind doughty, kisses Belle and then sings Real Live Girl, one of the standards in Cy Coleman and Carolyn Leigh's fine score...

novelty song called Mamma Says — the kind of number Stubby Kaye might have sung in the 1950s. Rebellion also features in The Scarlet Pimpernel (Minskoff Theatre)...

part is one note. Even his seduction of Marguerite comes off as a ploy. Early on, the Pimpernel rouses his mates with a speech about liberty and the importance of fighting injustice...

Two cast improvements are major. Rachel York makes a winning, frustrated Marguerite, loved and mistrusted by Percy's Pimpernel and by Rex Smith's bitter Chauvelin...

Edward Karam

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guides to arts and entertainment compiled by Merril Hargie. LONDON AMERICAN CONTRASTS: Two London premieres are on the programme as Oliver Knussen conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra in a celebration...



Soprano Nancy Argenta sings at the Wigmore

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London. THE BEST OF TIMES: The Endowment Theatre's production of Jerry Herman songs from La Cage aux Folles, Mama, Mack & Mabel and Hello, Dolly! transfers to the West End...

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

Geoff Brown's choice of the latest movies. NEW RELEASES IF ONLY (HS): Wayward but endearing comedy fantasy about a sailor granted another chance to succeed with his girlfriend...

ART GALLERIES

FAREWELL TO MOTOCROSS ST A loan exhibition of the work of the late 24th Nov to 18th Dec 1998 Michael Parkin Gallery 11 Motocross St, SW1 2SS 01454 4844

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Timeless ta... I have found it a good rule always to distrust a program in a story that begins with a big ladder, especially if the ladder is made on a big, brick-tired man and the man and his vest are as bright as a single spotlight... THEATRE Salomé Riverside Studio

**I**t sometimes takes a blinking idiot to point out the blindingly obvious. Today I cast myself (or typecast myself, as my colleagues would say) in that role. But first, the story so far. The Government, through its poodles and putting pressure on subsidised arts organisations to be more "accessible", to find new audiences and to rid themselves of their "middle-class, middle-aged" image.

That's not just an ideological obsession, of course: it's also pure panic. Nearly 2,000 lottery projects will soon open — an investment of billions of pounds by the United Kingdom of Great Britain. If those new audiences aren't found will swiftly become 2,000 mausoleums, and the arts sector will collapse under the weight of its own vainglorious ambitions.

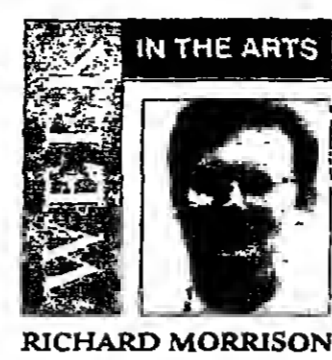
Hence the urgent interest in "accessibility". Everyone is desperately seeking the magic key that opens the hearts and minds of millions to the joys of late Schoenberg and early Strindberg. The hills are alive

## Forget outreach, what about some teachers?

with the sound of voucher schemes and outreach initiatives and marketing wheezes.

I don't want to knock this sudden missionary enthusiasm. One only wishes that it had happened a little earlier in the 60-year history of taxpayer-funded arts in Britain. But — and this is the "stating the obvious" bit — if you want to make fine wine, you need fine grapes. And if you want to create a cultured nation, you first create cultured children. You equip my drift. The arts will never find those "new audiences" while this Government, like its predecessor, persists in encouraging state schools to sideline the arts into invisibility.

More evidence of that sorry state, if more were needed, comes this week in *The Disappearing Arts?*, a survey by Rick Rogers for the Royal Society of Arts. Its observations are horrifying. The recruitment of music teachers for second-



RICHARD MORRISON

ary schools is predicted to fall 23 per cent below target this year. Many teacher-training institutions are actually abandoning specialist training in music and art.

The changes in the mandatory primary school curriculum, relegating music, dance, drama and art in favour of yet more slogging on spelling and arithmetic, has persuaded some schools to drop music altogether and many more to cut back on the time allocated to such "luxuries". Not surprisingly, demand among teachers for in-service training in the arts has dropped by 85 per cent. Many of these courses have consequently been dropped in the past year.

And so it goes on. "Too narrow a focus in the teaching of primary school children is squeezing the arts out of the curriculum," says the RSA, and suggests many excellent remedies — none of which will be taken up, if I know anything

about the British way of life. Add all this to the damage inflicted by the widespread withdrawal of peripatetic instrumental teaching and you have a dismal picture.

Yes, many of Britain's galleries and performing companies are doing fantastic educational work. But that can only be an icing on the cake, and then only for a small percentage of children. It can't replace proper classroom teaching.

If this cultural disaster was happening uniformly across Britain it would still be ghastly, but at least it would be fair dinkums all round. But it isn't. What makes this state of affairs rather obscene is the cultural apartheid it perpetuates. On the one hand are the private schools and those nice, affluent state schools to which Prime Ministers and influential journalists send their kids. They, of course, have purpose-built theatres and well-staffed music departments and all the other trappings of a civilised, well-rounded education.

On the other hand, what? Thousands of state schools with no cash, no culture and no teaching incentive except to grind the three Rs into their little charges so that the school can climb a few places up some accursed league table. What

sort of education is that? Children probably got more nourishment for the soul and food for the imagination in Stalin's Soviet Union.

Do we really expect that, having denied children a taste of the arts in their formative years, we can lure them into the theatre, concert hall and opera house when they do, we are mad. You reap what you sow in education, as in life. Tony Blair sees a pressing need to put an Internet terminal in every school, but not a music teacher. When his Government boasts about supporting the serious arts, would somebody remind him of that small but fatal misjudgment?

**R**isible spectacle of the week? That accolade must go to all those supposedly wild and free-thinking playwrights publicly wrestling with their consciences at the prospect of their be-

lived Royal Court Theatre being renamed the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre in order to receive yet another seven-figure handout.

It seems that the words "royal court", which the rest of us consider a little redolent of Marie Antoinette and powdered footmen, in fact have a strangely radical ring in Luvvieland — a quality that would be entirely dissipated by adding the word Jerwood. So a charitable foundation proffering £3 million (to get the pampered Royal Court out of a hole entirely of its own making) may be told to get stuffed. Good grief. Sometimes luvvies deserve every scrap of contempt that the tabloids can fling.

I suggest that the Jerwood Foundation presents its £3 million to the beleaguered Sir Peter Hall instead — or Sir Jerwood Hall, as he will subsequently be known. Without a penny of state subsidy his company has done wonders for London's theatre life. It actually deserves the doh. As for the Royal Court, well, it has long been home to rebels without a cause. Now it seems to be run by rebels without a clue.

# Master of sinew and muscle

**T**o see Luca Signorelli at his impassioned zenith, a visit to Orvieto is essential. There, in one of Italy's most dramatic hilltop cities, he painted an astounding fresco cycle for the cathedral. The commission took five years, from 1499 to 1504, covering the walls of the Cappella Nova where Fra Angelico had painted the ceiling 50 years before. But by the time Signorelli had completed it, Angelico's gentle, statuesque piety had given way to an invigorating alternative. For Signorelli marked the advent of a new century with a radical, ferociously inventive vision, whose dynamism would profoundly influence Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel decorations for decades to come.

Many of the sinewy figures galvanising the Cappella Nova have been seized by an apocalyptic frenzy. They are the despairing victims of *The End of the World*, and their eloquence testifies to Signorelli's command of the energetic male nude *in extremis*. By bringing together his work in British collections alone, the National Gallery's exhibition cannot hope to convey the full exhilaration of a pilgrimage to Orvieto. But an accompanying film gives a notion of the frescoes' visceral impact, and several of his drawings reveal the same command of writhing, muscular form. One celebrated black chalk study, supposedly showing the struggle between Hercules and Antaeus, may even have originated in preparations for the Cappella Nova's *The Torments of the Damned*. The drawings' air of ferocious spontaneity is underpinned by steely calculation, contrasting the anguish of one figure with the lethal resolve of his conqueror.

The only painting in the National Gallery survey to make a male nude its central focus is an early work. Part of an altarpiece commissioned by the wealthy Bichi family in Siena, it shows a lamentation over the dead Christ. The martyred

### VISUAL ART: Richard Cork revels in the vigorous work of the Italian painter Luca Signorelli

corpse slumped on the earth is conspicuously sensual. He recalls the languorous, detumescent man in Botticelli's sly painting of *Mars and Venus*, but his limp body is surrounded by the forms of grief-maddened women. Although this predella panel is modest in size, the figures seem to burst from its confines. Their exclamatory emotion belongs to a far larger image, and Signorelli demonstrated his command of a monumental surface in a grand altarpiece two years later.

Painted for the oratory of a lay confraternity in Volterra, it depicts *The Circumcision*. Signorelli had been a pupil of Piero della Francesca, from whom he must have gained his sophisticated grasp of pictorial space. And he leads our eyes deep into the scene along a startlingly multi-coloured marble floor.

The sense of recession is heightened by the robed woman on the right, arrested in the act of walking barefoot towards the Christ child. Her raised left heel seems to respond to the tension enveloping the group beyond. Enhanced by the almost metallic definition of draperies, this suspenseful mood impels most of the figures to stare down at the naked infant.

He is handled in a softer style by the Siennese artist "il Sodoma" who was asked to repaint the child in the late 1530s. Nobody knows why, but technical examination by the National Gallery has disclosed that Signorelli originally intended the infant to adopt a different pose. He was

meant to lean away from the man administering the circumcision. Then the pose was changed to a more relaxed and welcoming alternative. Sodoma's subsequent reworking gives him a sweetness smoother than anything the tough-minded Signorelli would have approved.

He was the ideal artist to portray Niccolò Vitelli, the brutal mercenary commander who bullied his way to become the Pope's representative in Città di Castello. Signorelli painted him posthumously in the 1490s, as a white-haired yet menacing presence. He looks cruel enough to eliminate any opposition to his ruthless ascendancy.

Around the same time, though, Signorelli showed the more tender side of his imagination in a large *Adoration of the Shepherds*, painted for a Citta di Castello church. Recent cleaning has revealed an extra angel, who now joins the adoring group gathered so tightly around Virgin and offspring. Covered up by a 19th-century restorer, the angel certainly makes the composition look more congested.

Signorelli must have wanted to convey fervency, but his design lacks the clarity that distinguishes *The Circumcision*. He reserves his most inventive powers for the rocks surging fantastically above the group, and for the plants observed with a limpid delicacy inspired, perhaps, by Hugo van der Goes's great *Portinari* altarpiece in Florence.

Extensive damage has made Signorelli's frescoes in the so-called *camera bella* at



Luca Signorelli's *The Circumcision*: the artist probably gained his grasp of pictorial space from Piero della Francesca

## Timeless take on perversion

**S**ince I have found it a good rule always to mistrust a production that begins with a man in a string vest on a plain-looking ladder, especially if the ladder is isolated on a big, brick-lined stage and the man and his vest are perched below a single spotlight, my spirits slumped a bit at the opening of Mick Gordon's revival of Oscar Wilde's tragedy. Wasn't the very simplicity ostentatious, the



Emily Woof and Greg Hicks in a stylised revival of Wilde's tragedy

sparseness pretentious, given the opulence of the words and the wilful decadence of the plot, not to mention stage directions that demand moons, big black clouds and slaves with torches?

As it turned out, no, not at all. Strangeness need not, after all, consist of exotic decor and a cast list featuring innumerable Nubians and Nazarenes. Enough to pare down Lord Alfred Douglas's translation of Wilde's original French, present us with a few good, intense actors in slightly eccentric modern dress in and leave our imaginations to fill in the gaps. That is Gordon's way, and, on the whole, it works.

It works especially well when Tristan Sturrock's Jokanaan, or John the Baptist, is making the theatre into a mike that makes the theatre echo with his anguish, or when Emily Woof's Salomé, summons him from his ladder, a pale figure whose glinting, dark-rimmed eyes

might have come from Waco or Jonestown. It works when Greg Hicks's Herod is padding about in his long, black coat, blending authority with insecurity, or palpitating with sensuality, or lurching with sickened dismay as Salomé reveals her exorbitant dance-fee.

The approach is stylised and yet often surprisingly immediate. Several times I noted almost comic bariolages of speech that had surely been inserted by Gordon — "come, Salomé, be reasonable. I've never been hard to you" — only to find on checking that they were Bosie's own. As a result, *Salomé* emerges, not as some music epic from an odd-note biblical jungles, but as an intimate tale of perverse drives within a family which no doubt has its analogues in our own era.

Sometimes it all goes too far. When Woof was spiralling about in her white trouser suit, I felt that the *Dance of the Seven Veils* was in danger of becoming an attempt by a rather fey tennis professional to limber up for the next day's match. Her Salomé lacks ferociousness; and yet one believes in this slim, mocking girl's selfishness and her emotional dilettantism and her morbid fascination with the strange and different. Add Veronica Quilligan as a podgy, sneering Herodias, and you have a production that justifies Gordon's decision to export examples of his work from his home theatre, the Gate, to the warehouse of Riverside Studios. It deserves the larger audience he wants.

**BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE**

## Middle-aged chemistry thrills



slipping off her kimono and wriggling on a black skirt and matching jacket.

Granny, tottering along to discover what keeps her away from the house for hours at a time. It is a longing for silence, we discover, and this need, far more insistent than a wish to have a bit of time to herself, arches over the play and returns at the end, when her life has been changed by a man who cannot disguise his astonishment that such a plain, religious, peculiar woman has similarly changed his.

Reidy's pink, round face, a stranger to make-up, looks as if tears (of grief? wonder?) are never far away. It is lovely to watch the way her hands move, and Stahl's

toilet, clumped together in the middle of the stage, ringed with a scattering of autumn leaves, and when Noreen rushes on at the start of the play, ups her skirt, downs her tights and sits on the loo — cue for the sound of falling water — I feared the worst for the play that would follow.

What immediately follows is

too revealing hesitation, desire, and all the conflicts between *ought* not and *maybe might*. An hilarious yet entirely serious scene in a confessional with Father O'Ryan (Gary Liburni) points her dilemma: might fornication in a cemetery be granted God's approval? Father doesn't think so at all, not at all, but surely Noreen (the saint) is on the side of the angels?

Townsend's ear is attuned to the tricky tenderness existing between Noreen and her piping Granny, but even more remarkable is her understanding of the ways in which the good-hearted Scottish boozier finds himself so unexpectedly afflicted. Directed by Polly Teale with zealous care for the significance of glance and gesture, *Angels and Saints* and its players fuse together in a thrilling artistic chemistry.

**JEREMY KINGSTON**

## Set on a collision course to nowhere

**I**NSTEAD of programme notes, you are given a postcard that reads simply "A head-on collision between two women who can't see that they are exactly the same."

The two women in question are Claire Dowie and Peta Lily, who occupy what look like two restaurant tables about ten yards apart on the Drill Hall stage. The idea of them ramming into each other has a certain preposterous entertainment value, but this proves as misleading as the claim that they are alike. Which they're not. Lily is a fragrant, power-dressing yuppie; Dowie is a shifty, manly-looking 39-year-old in jeans and a brown leather jacket that is far too big. "Why did you come?" asks Lily,

slipping off her kimono and wriggling on a black skirt and matching jacket.

"Curiously," says Dowie, jiggling her knee. "Curiosity killed the cat," says Lily. "Better a cat than a bitch," says Dowie. And so it goes. A needling match rather than a boxing match in which the two women — former lovers, we discover — try to harpoon each other's feminist credentials and end up missing by miles.

With no context to speak of, this competition (to call it a power-struggle would be far too dramatic) about who has the upper hand feels half-baked at best. It seems to be years since they last met, such is their awkwardness and aggres-

cookers, they gradually make it clear that their adolescent affair was partly responsible for launching their lives and careers on wildly differing trajectories, and that their personal revolutions stem from teenage jealousies. Oh, and that they listened to records rather than each other.

Booish, scraggy and churlish to the end, Dowie's rebel without a plot wears her chips all too heavily on her slumped shoulders. Lily wears her jaded Thatcherite glamour like armour. If they did collide, it would presumably be Camden council which would have to pick up the mess.

**JAMES CHRISTOPHER**





POP ALBUMS  
Cartoon capers

ARTS

POP GIG  
Happy Family

NEW POP ALBUMS: America's South Park cartoon may be cult TV viewing, but the joke wears terribly thin in rock'n'roll, says David Sinclair

# Killing Kenny and the rest of us

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*Chef Aid: The South Park Album* (American/Columbia 491700 £14.99)

COMEDY may not be the new rock'n'roll, but two have become increasingly cosy bedfellows in the years since Beavis and Butt-Head began lampooning the values and videos of the MTV generation. An audience has grown up (physically, anyway) for whom musical Year Zero was marked by the first Beastie Boys album, and it is this adolescent constituency, with its taste for heavy rock and rap music liberally laced with a brattish sense of humour, that has been successfully wooed by the crudely drawn characters and puerile in-jokes of the cult TV cartoon series *South Park*. Now comes *Chef Aid: The South Park Album*.

Loosely structured as a "benefit concert" on behalf of the Chef character (played with laconic wit by Isaac Hayes), the album accommodates a diverse cast of performers ranging from superannuated heavy rocker Ozzy Osbourne to rap star du jour Wyclef Jean, along with a raft of dependably eccentric American groups including Primus, Ween and Devo.

Executive producer Rick Rubin has a finely tuned ear for this kind of thing, and manages to coax some surprisingly substantial performances from Elton John on *Wake Up Wendy*, and an unholy alliance of Mase, Puff Daddy, Lil' Kim and System of a Down on a thundering rap-rock

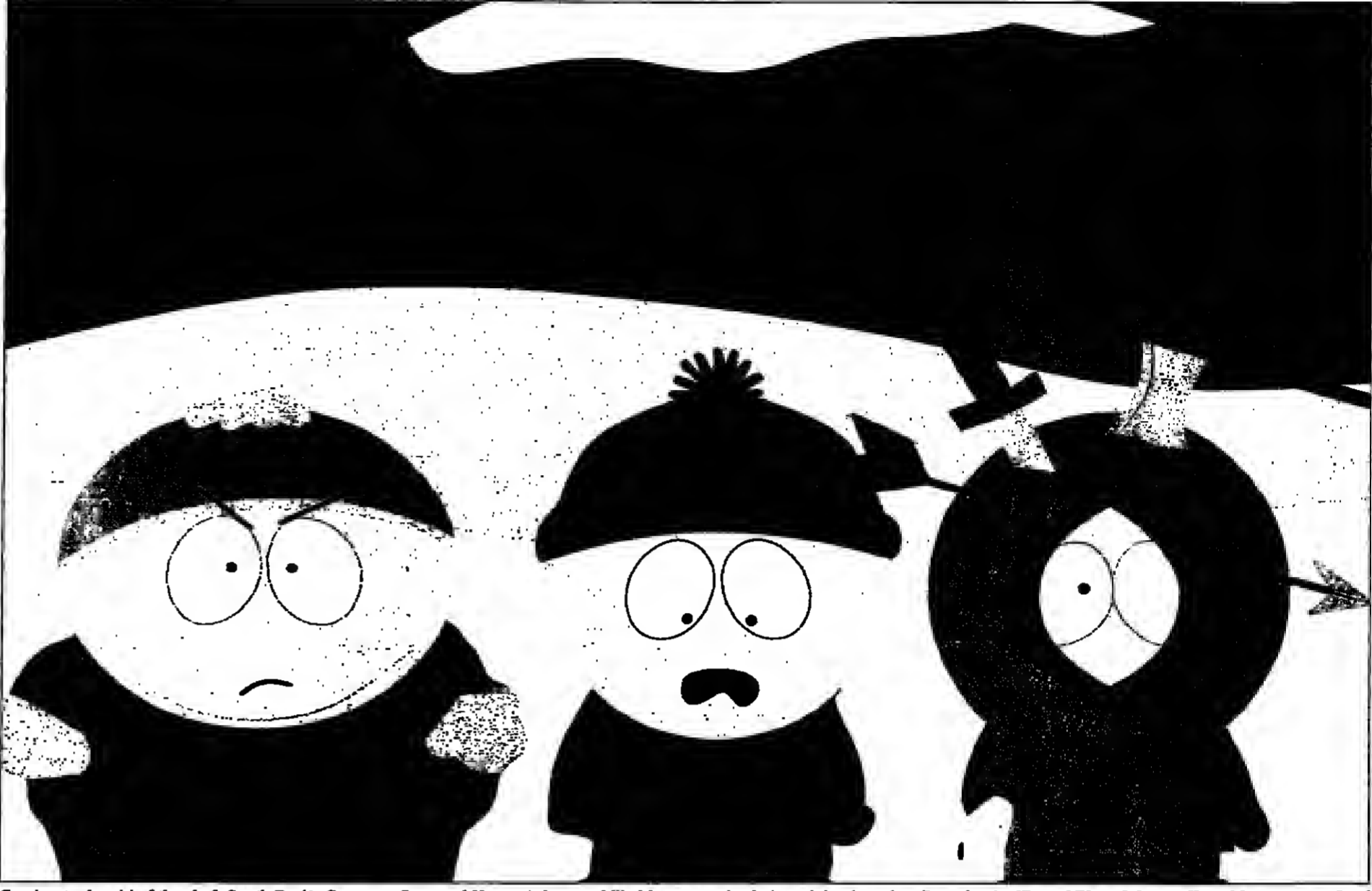
number called *Will They Die 4 You*.

But the trouble with comedy albums is that they rarely stand up to repeated exposure, and this one is no exception. The silly-voiced versions of Bad Company's *Feel Like Makin' Love* and Styx's *Come Sail Away*, performed by characters from the show, are immediately irritating, while other jokey set pieces, such as Kenny's *Dead* (a retooled version of Curtis Mayfield's *Freddie's Dead*) and a duet between Chef and Meat Loaf on *Tonight Is Right For Love*, do not take much longer to pall.

Chef's detailed recipe for *Chocolate Salty Balls* does have a rude vigour which is typical of the album. But frankly, it might make sense to stick them in your ears.

**THE LANCE GAMBIT TRIO**  
*Cocktail 2000* (Music For Leisure MFLCD03 £11.99)

WHILE outright comedy can be difficult to pull off in a pop environment, irony is not a problem. Operating in much the same vein as the Mike Flowers Pops, though sadly without the rug, the Lance Gambit Trio offers a selection of instrumental lounge-bar arrangements of 1990s hits by artists such as Blur, Robbie Williams, the Verve, the Spice



Coming to the aid of the chef: *South Park*'s Cartman, Stan and Kenny (who gets killed in most episodes) are joined on the album by the likes of Elton John, Puff Daddy and Meat Loaf

Girls, Aqua and Oasis. Gambit's piano playing is stiff and colourless, and if there is such a drummer as Tommy Monk, he sounds more like a drum machine than most drum machines do. But you could imagine any of these recordings happily being piped through the corridors of Ikea.

The real joke is how such treatments expose the paucity of melodic and harmonic interest in some songs — *Return Of The Mack*, *D'You Know What I Mean*, *Parklife* and others — while highlighting the solid, essentially traditional foundations of others — notably *Say You'll Be There* and *The Drugs Don't Work*.

**THE TAMPERER**  
FEATURING MAYA  
*Fabulous* (Pepper/5ive 053016 £13.49)

TAKE away an additional Khubbheads Khubb Mix of their No1 hit *Feel It*, tacked on

at the end, and the debut album by Italian DJ duo the Tamperer clocks in at just 32 minutes; a slender offering, although it seems longer.

Like so much European disco music, *Fabulous* is a clever-

ly tweaked, of-the-moment product which relies heavily on old ideas. *Feel It* is based on a sample of the Jacksons' *Can You Feel It*, while *Get Up Get It On* borrows the horn riff from the Four Tops' *Reach Out (I'll Be There)*. The duo's own compositions are scarcely more original.

Typically, the music is set to a rigid disco beat so unyielding that it sounds more like a square-bashing drill than the sound track to a night on the tiles.

The comely Maya then supplies a suitably thought-provoking slogan — "What's she going to look like with a chimney on her?" is her most suc-

cessful so far — and *void*, another hit is in the bag.

Hastily assembled and rushed into the shops in time for the party season, *Fabulous* is a blatant smash and grab raid on the yule funds. They should have called themselves the Plunderer.

**ROBYN HITCHCOCK**  
*Storefront Hitchcock* — *Music from the Jonathan Demme Picture* (Warner Bros 9362-46846 £15.99)

ALTHOUGH doomed forever to roam the cult hinterlands along with fellow English folk-rock eccentrics such as Roy Harper, Robyn Hitchcock still

has the clout to play the Queen Elizabeth Hall next Monday and to get film director Jonathan Demme (*Silence of the Lambs*) to make a documentary about him.

Recorded live in a New York shop window, and punctuated by rambling, surreal monologues, *Storefront Hitchcock* is the soundtrack to Demme's movie, and captures the former Soft Boy in full idiosyncratic flight. From the "jittery" histrionics of *Freeze* to a surprisingly tender version of Jimi Hendrix's *The Wind Cries Mary*, Hitchcock maintains a fitful momentum without ever disclosing what exactly he is on about.

**TOP 10 ALBUMS**

- (1) *Ladies & Gentlemen - The Best of* George Michael (Epic)
- (2) *I've Been Expecting You* Robbie Williams (Chrysalis)
- (3) *Talk on Corners* Corrs (Atlantic)
- (4) *The Best of 1980-1990* U2 (Island)
- (5) *Sleep Out* Stone (5ive)
- (6) *One Night Only* Bee Gees (Polydor)
- (7) *Voice of an Angel* Charlotte Church (Sony Classical)
- (8) *The Best of* M People (M People)
- (9) *Wish You Were Here* Pink Floyd (Capitol)
- (10) *Mezz* Mariah Carey (Columbia)

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## Dazzled by the twin beams

Only the Spice Girls have put more bums on seats in the UK this year than Tunde Baiyewu and Paul Tucker. After tomorrow's homecoming show in Newcastle, the Lighthouse Family will have played to 225,000 people in 1998, not to mention the three million copies of their two albums that have slipped into the CD trays of a nation in the past two and a half years.

Their airy MOR style, set in train after a couple of false starts with the 1996 success of *Lifted*, has laid the duo bare to accusations of self-satisfied musical conservatism. As if they need worry, the public appetite for the product is insatiable, but the Family and friends work extremely hard at feeding it. This was their second Wembley engagement of the year and the seventh UK arena date on a schedule that also stretched across seven other European countries.

Early-comers had the bonus of a support slot by Karen Ramirez, one of the year's most refreshing pop discoveries, who showcased her charming *Distant Dreams* album in the Arena's unenviable wide open spaces. Her lack of live experience was occasionally evident, but songs such as the futuristic *New Reality* and the Latin-inflected *Troubled Girl* bode well for her future, and a stripped-back version of her

hit *Looking For Love* with Tony Remy on acoustic guitar was particularly successful.

The Family opened with industrial scenes of moving trains and factory chimneys, but the group's music sits higher in the social strata, and a swatch of tasteful pastels from their albums was soon on display. They are justifiably more confident now in their powers as live entertainers, and their roles are well defined: Baiyewu with the honeyed voice and slightly coy demeanour, Tucker the laddish cheerleader urging the crowd to make this their "best show ever".

Both parties gave it a go, with *Lifted* living up to its title. The formulaic feel of some of their subsequent hits did sometimes prompt a haven't-we-had-this-one feeling, and the Lighthouse beam would hardly be dimmed if they were to stir a few unexpected spices into the concert stew. But then *High* was a veritable roof-raiser. This may be laquered and veneered pop for the Ikea generation, but have you seen the queues outside their stores?



Tunde Baiyewu and Paul Tucker of the Lighthouse Family

## NEW MUSIC: Gerald Larner listens to works by two Estonian composers in Huddersfield

"I HAVE discovered," Arvo Pärt has observed, "that it is enough when a single note is played beautifully." Many notes, most of them by Pärt, have been beautifully sung and played by the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. They have not been enough.

It is true that impressively large audiences came to the concerts to indulge themselves in Pärt's asceticism and, to judge by their reactions, found some judge by their refreshment in his patient, minimally elaborated, self-consciously pure settings of religious texts. It is also true that these works do offer a refuge from the real world. But for how long they do that depends entirely on the temperament of the individual member of the congregation. For those who find it difficult to believe in cults and who look to the Huddersfield Festi-

val for contemporary music, the whole Pärt celebration has been a perplexing experience.

What is the point, the sceptics might have asked themselves at the first British performance of the *Canon of Russian Pentance*, of this stimulation of Russian Orthodox church music and this holy observation of so many of the textural and colour restrictions that implies? The vocal lines and harmonies do flow naturally from the rhythms and inflections of the Slavonic church text and they do immediately create their own atmosphere. The singing of the EPCC under the dedicated direction of Taru Kaljuste remained remarkably fresh and admirably secure throughout an

unsparingly long succession of unaccompanied odes and prayers. While appreciating all that, as time went on and through sheer force of self-denial — the event became less of a musical performance and more a church ritual, any member of the audience who had come to St Paul's Hall for aesthetic interest can only have become increasingly frustrated.

Much the same observations apply to the concert in the Town Hall where the EPCC was joined by the Hilliard Ensemble and the TCO, again under the direction of Kaljuste. The basic procedure of Pärt's *Litany*, which most prominently includes a prayer setting for an ensemble of four solo voices, is at-

tracted in its ethereal colouring and its precise setting of its English text. But, subtitled "prayers of St John of Chrysostom for each hour of the night and day", *Litany* goes through its basic procedure 24 times, which again represents a submission of music to the ritual of mortification in spite of the overall structural strategy of the piece. The same composer's *Trisagion*, which is scored for string ensemble but articulated according to the inflections of old Slavonic prayers, did little to reverse the balance.

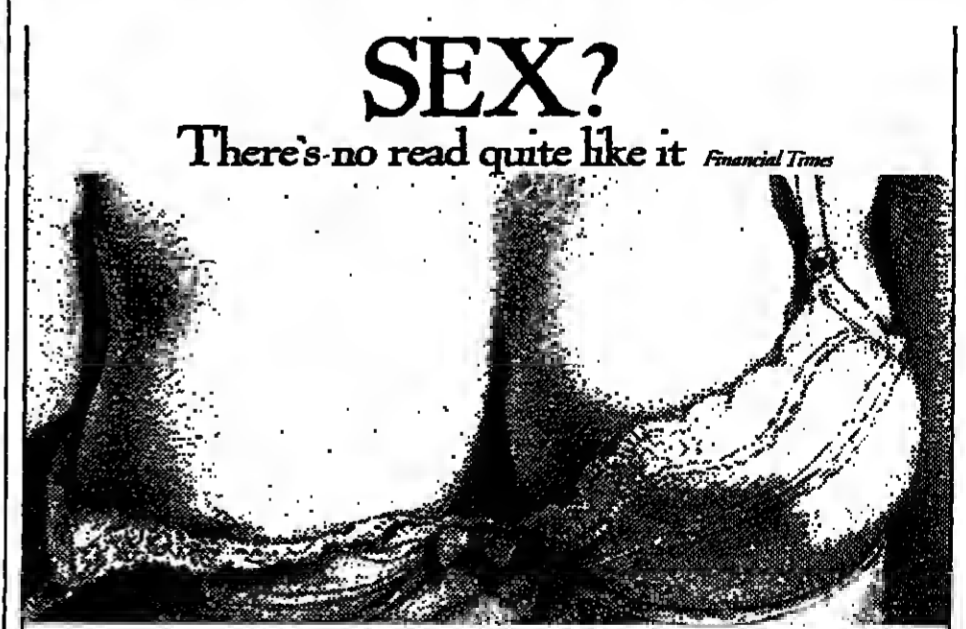
So, in circumstances dominated by the ethos and influence of Pärt, it was brave of Erkki-Sven Tüür, a representative of a younger generation of Estonian composers, to compose a requiem in which he has not only shortened the liturgical text, instead of stretching it to infinity, but has set it and coloured it in his own resourceful way.

## Songs that spring surprises

Leighton-Thomas played to her strengths, conveying the lyric with the genuine authority of an actress. She sounded just as persuasive on the study in melancholy that was *Down*, as well as on the mischievous Nicki's *Dilemma*. *Love For Sale* supplied a rare look backwards, but the arrangement moved from a conventional pop into a funkier chorus propelled by Alec Dankworth's insistent bass line and Paul Robinson's adroit backbeat. Porter goes contemporary.

CLIVE DAVIS

face, who acts as composer and arranger on her album. Whenever Landesman's inspirational flags — in *A New York Minute*, for instance, is not much more than a tourist bus tour of the mean streets — Wallace is always on hand with a crisp phrase or an unexpected twist of melody. They make an imposing team. I would be surprised not to hear more cover versions of *Only Why No More*, a ballad said to have been inspired by Beckett. Its accumulation of enigmatic phrases leaves the impression of one long, yearning sigh.



## THE Erotic Review

is the fastest-growing magazine in Britain, and the most talked-about. In the bumper Christmas issue (out now), you will find: Simon Raven's scandalous new story; an exclusive excerpt from Arnold Wesker's new erotic novel; Fiona Pitt-Kethley goes into brothels and Michael Bywater runs one; Naim Atallah writes on knickers; Stephen Bayley puts Peter Mandelson behind him and discusses the new taboos; Christina Odone is stranded on the Island of Seduction.

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# 'You've got to follow the money — a joint venture in Europe is the way forward'

Rupert Murdoch is seeking media deals with partners on the Continent. It is, he tells Raymond Snoddy, the place to be

This weekend Rupert Murdoch was planning to spend Thanksgiving at his farm at Carmel in California. It was going to be a rare four-day holiday for the chairman and chief executive of The News Corporation, parent company of *The Times*.

"I was really looking forward to it. I needed it to recharge my batteries," says Murdoch. Instead he will be flying the Atlantic back to London for expected talks with Franco Bernabè, the newly appointed chief executive of Telecom Italia. A planned joint venture with the Italian group to launch digital satellite television in Italy is the first and most significant part of a new attack on the continental European market through a new Milan-based subsidiary, News Corp Europe.

Instead of the holiday, Murdoch says that he will probably be "walking around Sky. It won't be heavy duty."

On Monday he was in London for the News Corp Europe launch. Then it was off to the US for a speaking engagement at the Harvard Business School on Tuesday.

"I would like to attract business graduate students in the US and the UK into the media and let them know that life doesn't have to lead to an investment bank or McKinsey (the management consultants)."

Rupert Murdoch is talking over coffee in the lounge of the Savoy Hotel soon after introducing the executive chairman of News Corp Europe, Letizia Moratti (the former chairwoman of RAI, the Italian state broadcaster) to the international press.

In addition to the partnership with Telecom Italia, News Corp Europe plans a joint venture with TF1, the French broadcaster, to launch a cable and satellite channel targeted at 15 to 35-year-olds. More partnerships and deals are clearly under way, although Murdoch says he much prefers the operational side of newspapers and TV to the hours spent inside merchant banks finalising deals.

He says he is enjoying life very much and has lost none of his appetite for expanding News Corporation — even though it is "a little too frantic". Earlier this month there were the "road shows" for the public offering of shares in the Fox film and TV businesses, which involved two trips to the UK in two weeks and up to eight presentations a day in 15 American cities.

At the end of it he had to fly to Australia for the weekend to attend the funeral of his first wife Patricia: their marriage was dissolved 30 years ago. Talking about his schedule, Murdoch, who will be 68 in March, says: "I keep fit. I work out at the gym every day. I get the chance, which means when I am in New York or Los Angeles. I feel I am fitter than I have ever been. I hope I am mentally fit as well."

The move into Europe is one of News Corporation's most significant for some time and comes after possible links with Canal Plus in France, with the Kirch organisation in Germany, and with Silvio Berlusconi — "at his invitation" —

came to nothing. A newspaper joint venture in Germany with the publishers Burda was a failure. Until now, despite the aspirations, there has been little in continental Europe apart from a 49 per cent stake in the German television channel VOX and a Dutch radio station. All that is going to change.

"I think it has become essential for an international company to follow this globalisation thing," says Murdoch. "You have got to follow the money and, apart from the emotions, Europe is 40 per cent of the media market, the US is 40 per cent and the rest is 20 per cent."

Worse, much worse, than the cultural and linguistic barriers were the politics and the different media rules in virtually every country. "A European venture with a European face and European partners, I think, is the only way forward," says Murdoch, who is seeking partners to take 5 per cent or 10 per cent stakes in the holding company. On a country-by-country basis, part-

ners would take much larger stakes, such as Telecom Italia's planned 51 per cent in the digital satellite venture to News Corp Europe's 39 per cent. Murdoch declines to name potential partners, although it is likely that they will include major European publishing houses anxious to extend their presence in the electronic media. The Axel Springer group of Germany, publishers of *Bild* newspaper, and Rizzoli, owners of the *Corriere della Sera* newspaper, are clearly the sort of companies he has in mind.

As he opens up a new front in the international media battle, Murdoch is very content at the current state of his existing businesses and believes that Britain "is quite the star performer". "The Sky Digital launch has been terrific. It has succeeded in fixing in the public mind that digital and Sky are almost synonymous." He says that the next stage of the marketing campaign will be to promote specific channels such as Discovery and National Geographic, and the coverage of live events.

His mood is hardening against ONDigital, the digital terrestrial service, which also carries BSkyB channels such as sports and movies. Murdoch says he finds it hard that BSkyB should have to provide its best programmes to ONDigital while ONDigital is not required to "supply its programmes to us, inasmuch as it has any". "We had to fight them to get the money we were owed and had to fight the Independent Television Commission at every stage to get a level playing field."

He says of ONDigital: "I think we are real rivals now and in some ways we would love to be able to keep all the sport to ourselves, because we pioneered it." He adds with a grin: "We are going out to win". Rupert Murdoch says that his UK newspapers — *The Sun*, *News of the*



Rupert Murdoch, chairman and chief executive of The News Corporation: ready to do business on the Continent

*World*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* — are "holding their positions in the marketplace extremely well" and a period of stability is likely with no intensification of the price war. There is a slight downturn in classified advertising at *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, although this has been more than made up for by better-than-expected national advertising.

Although there has been an occasional raised eyebrow over some of *The Sun's* headlines — asking if Tony Blair was the most dangerous man in Britain over the euro, and wondering whether Britain was run by "a gay mafia", are the main examples — Murdoch says he is a "100 per cent supporter" of David Yelland's editorship.

"There have been moments of overstatement but David is a very intelligent young man, and it is inevitable when a new editor comes into a paper, which was in danger of losing its self-confidence, and forces the pace that there will be a few mistakes," he says. "But David is the sort of person who learns from his mistakes without a word from me or anyone else." Murdoch is watching the uncertainty over the future of Polygram Filmed Entertainment production carefully and would be very interested in working with some of its independent producers if they became available.

If the price was right, News Corporation might still be interested in EMI, the

music publishing and record group, despite Murdoch's worries about the music market.

In the UK, Murdoch believes he could now be "a natural ally" of the BBC and would like to work more closely with the corporation. In the past, he says, people have exaggerated his opposition to the BBC simply because certain editors of *The Sun* have taken against the corporation, as have editors of *The Times*, mainly over the licence fee.

"I have always had, I think, good relations with the governors of the BBC," he says. "I think we could work with them and I would like to. Our problem is that in the ranks of the BBC there is an elitism which doesn't like me or our newspapers, or Sky in particular. Their strategy department seems obsessed with how to fight Sky and Murdoch rather than what's best for the BBC."

He is delighted that, for the past three weeks, Fox Broadcasting has been the number one US network in its 15 hours of prime-time programming — though mainly by holding on to its audience as others fell away.

But even as he notes with pleasure such unexpected successes, Murdoch still worries about one subject — what to do about the Internet.

"The huge trend in the media is the Internet. It is immense and we have a constant discussion," he says. Yet apart

from using the Internet for brand extension, News Corporation has not taken a major plunge. Murdoch could, he says, have bought a large stake in Amazon.com, the Internet book-selling service, and made a \$1 billion capital gain by selling the stake. But Amazon, he adds, has yet to make a penny profit and is already facing intensified competition.

Murdoch points out that 140 companies raised capital in the US in the early days of the automobile and none is around today. "There will certainly be a time. We will find a way into it (the Internet) but if you are going to make money out of it, you have to provide a unique service that will be hard for anyone to imitate, or some form of branded merchandise."

As he spends the Thanksgiving weekend trying to cement the big move into Italy on the back of exclusive football rights, the goal is clear in his mind. "All types of information are going to become ubiquitous in every home. You get it off satellite, off an ISDN telephone line or your cable. The transactions will be tremendous. The working wife will do her supermarket shopping when she gets home on Friday night — the same order as last week, plus strawberries, and for a £3 or £4 surcharge it will be on your doorstep at 9am," Murdoch forecasts.

The only tricky bit will be actually getting there.

'I feel that I am fitter than I have ever been'

'I think we could work with the BBC and I'd like to'

IS THE Kirsty Young bubble about to burst? When ITV confirmed Trevor McDonald and Dermot Murnaghan as presenters for the new 6.30pm and 11pm news this week there was no mention of Channel 5's golden girl. An ITV executive explained gleefully that they had no plans to buy her out of her contract with CS, which runs to the end of 1999. Kelvin MacKenzie scathingly dubbed her "the invisible woman" when he bought Talk Radio: she had not hosted its breakfast show since July despite signing for a year.

Instead, that likeable rising star Katie Derham, ITN's arts and media correspondent, will stand in for Murnaghan when he stands in for McDonald at 6.30pm. Meanwhile, Chris Shaw, Channel 5's new head of factual programmes and the man behind Young's success on Channel 5 News, is promising to foster her career with a bigger-budget talk show. (Channel 5 never approved of her Talk Radio deal.) One final thought: those at the sharp end of the news business point out that Young's agent is Mike Hollingsworth, estranged husband of Anne Diamond.

■ HUGE relief at loss-making GMTV after the offer of a £30 million a year cut in its franchise payments. Eamonn Holmes, its men's 500,000-a-year anchorman, may apply for a rise, but I'm told that GMTV's programme budget will be the beneficiary. At £25,000 an hour, GMTV spends half the amount of BBC Breakfast News and ITV's daytime shows, and is even cheaper to make than the £30,000 an hour that ITV allocates for regional programmes. There will be more live news reports, such as today's item about switching on the Christmas lights at Omagh, which GMTV sees as its key selling point. Its top programme executives are off on a two-day conference next week to work out their game plan. Inevitably, it is braced for a bidding war with ITV's new tabloid current affairs programme, the unofficially named *60 Minutes*.

■ THE Granada team devising *60 Minutes* is also holding a big pow-wow next week, attended by presenter Trevor McDonald, to flesh out the concept. Jeff Anderson, the editor, has received around 5,000 applications for the 30-plus jobs on offer, with the cream of BBC journalists forming part of the stampede to join the other star presenter, Martin Bashir. But Anderson is anxious to hire tabloid newspaper talent: they are the ones, he says, who know how to dig — although Granada's in-house *World in Action* team has a pretty good record at the more serious stuff. With a £200,000-an-hour budget, *60 Minutes* is going to bid for exclusives with big names in the news, such as Geoff Boycott. How would it cover the Ron Davies affair? I'm told the programme might try to interview his wife, or former wife, or run a knockabout piece about Clapham house prices and their residents. The rest of us could then laugh at the City types who compete to pay upwards of £300,000 for a cramped Victorian terrace.

■ IT'S the biggest media story of the year... sales of broadsheet newspapers are plummeting. With this battle cry, Piers Morgan, the Editor of *The Mirror*, ordered a new media column this week to attack the "black-top" media pundits such as *The Guardian's* Roy Green and *Wiv Envy's* Greenstead, who keep writing about how the "red tops" are in decline. Morgan huffs: "It's a rapid response column to be utilised to take revenge against the cant and hypocrisy from the unpopular press. Every broadsheet journalist should feel apprehensive." Alan Rusbridger, the Editor of *The Guardian*, sent a spoof legal letter. Simon Kelner, the Editor of *The Independent*, wrote to advise that his name was spelt with one "l".

## My PR strategy for Boycott

ON THE face of it, defending the reputation of self-confessed male chauvinist and professional Yorkshireman Geoffrey Boycott against allegations of battering his girlfriend at a luxury hotel on the Côte d'Azur was going to be an uphill struggle. So many public preconceptions and misconceptions, there was precious little point in trying to reinvent my client.

Ironically, I was approached first by his former girlfriend, Margaret Moore — she was drinking champagne with a friend at the time and demanding £1 million for details of an attack at the hands of one of the "world's biggest stars". The clock struck 13 and I knew this woman was not for Max Clifford.

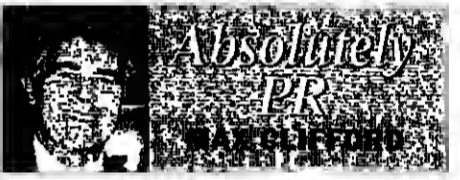
Subsequently, Geoffrey's people were in contact and I had realised in the interim that if, as claimed, he had hit her 20 times then Ms Moore's face would be a bloody pulp. Of course, it would be a challenge to save his reputation but she was living in cloud-cuckoo-land.

The verdict of the French judge, who refused to admit evidence which might have proved Ms Moore had fallen and hit her head on a table, in conjunction with *The Sun's* stand against Boycott, looked grim. But, like or despise the man, he has no previous form for battering anyone, male or female.

The strategy was simple — England's greatest ever defensive batsman must open himself up to scrutiny from television, press, and radio journalists in an attempt to salvage his career as a cricket commentator from the ashes. He was on a good wicket, anyway — his trial in Grasse was widely acknowledged as a shambles and, three weeks on, the controversy rumbles still.

The PR plan adopted has been to challenge journalists to look at all the evidence revealed at the trial and then to make up their own minds as to who is telling the truth. Fortunately for Boycott, it is a message that has been working effectively for him and resulted in interviews and news features in the *Daily Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Mirror* and *The Express*.

TV appearances on BBC and GMTV have shown increasing public support for Boycott. Interviews on Radio 5 Live and Talk Radio with



the associated phone-ins revealed 70 per cent in his favour. Additional support came from Erin Pizzev, founder of the Women's Refuge, who on TV and radio declared that she believed and supported the former cricketer.

It wasn't a walkover, though. Newspaper columnist and TV presenter Nina Myskow declared that she did not believe Boycott's version of events and was pleased with the verdict. But with detractors like her who needs supporters?

Of all the national and local newspapers that carried Boycott features and interviews, only *The Express* came out for Margaret Moore — not surprising, maybe, when you consider that the *Daily Mail's* Lynda Lee-Potter, Angela Levin and Ian Woodbridge had all written extremely supportive articles. In addition to gaining increasing support from the public, the media PR assault by Boycott has meant that discussions are now taking place with people who in the changing climate feel comfortable employing him as a commentator/analyst. Talk Radio has already signed him to cover the Ashes tour, and other contracts will be announced soon.

■ HOW delicious that our hereditary peers might be saved from extinction with the help of a Hollywood film star. Who would have thought that a potential saviour could come in the shape of Jamie Lee Curtis? In a desperate attempt to blunt Tony Blair's axe, Jamie was wheeled in on the arm of her husband, Lord Haden-Guest, to the delight of the assembled company. Her appearance captured a vast amount of media attention, almost overshadowing the arrival of the Queen.

The message was loud and clear: "We are not old, powdered and out of touch. How can we possibly be when Lady Haden-Guest, better known as Ms Lee Curtis, is one of us."

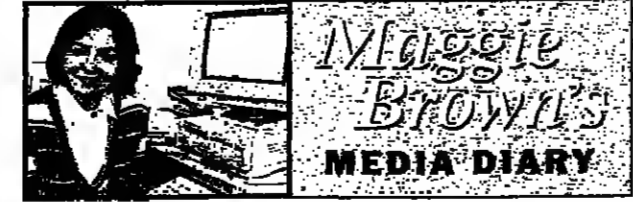
Such is the passion stirred up among these noble peers that cries of "shame" were heard as the Queen announced plans for their abolition, the first time in living memory that the Sovereign's address had been interrupted.

With a Hollywood queen triumphing their cause and William Hague, the Conservative leader, pledging his support, this drama looks set to create a media feast for years to come.

My personal worry would be that if so many of them are thrown out of the Lords, where else could they go? They might find themselves involved with everyday life and start to cause a bloody nuisance to the rest of us.

■ Max Clifford is managing director of Max Clifford Associates Ltd

## Is no one thirsty for Kirsty, any more?



With this battle cry, Piers Morgan, the Editor of *The Mirror*, ordered a new media column this week to attack the "black-top" media pundits such as *The Guardian's* Roy Green and *Wiv Envy's* Greenstead, who keep writing about how the "red tops" are in decline. Morgan huffs: "It's a rapid response column to be utilised to take revenge against the cant and hypocrisy from the unpopular press. Every broadsheet journalist should feel apprehensive." Alan Rusbridger, the Editor of *The Guardian*, sent a spoof legal letter. Simon Kelner, the Editor of *The Independent*, wrote to advise that his name was spelt with one "l".

■ THE *Daily Mail* on Monday ran a banner headline across Page 1:

"Why we should all turn off our TV sets tonight." Holding *Nanny Mail* by the hand, I half took the paper's advice at 9pm, watching *Vice: The Ser Trade* from behind the sofa. I caught sight of a fat man being wrapped up in a nappy and being offered a breast to nuzzle. Since some ten million viewers are lapping up this stuff, is the *Mail* out of touch with Middle England? Well, a very senior ITV executive tells me that he's unhappy with the series too, that it's tacky, satellite TV fodder, not the sort of mainstream programme you would expect on Britain's most popular network.

Another executive says it has not been "very revelatory" — though perhaps we should be thankful for that. But he added that it's the sort of series which can be played more suitably at 10pm, once *News at Ten* is dropped next March.

■ The *Daily Mail* on Monday ran a banner headline across Page 1:

media times

# Small is beautiful again

### Film shorts are enjoying a revival, says Imogen O'Rorke

The short film, the long-lost second cousin of widescreen cinema, is making a commercial comeback. Audiences who pay to see the new British romantic comedy, *If Only*, in London and at multiplexes around the country when it opens today, will be getting another love tangle thrown in for free: *Blink*, an 11-minute film, written and directed by Amy Jenkins, the creator of *This Life*.

Cinemagoers who have been turning up to see *Divorcing Jack*, may already have caught Ewan McGregor in *Desserts*, a three-minute short in which he stars as a human fish, made by Geoff Stark, a commercial director.

The last short to have such wide distribution in the UK went out with *Tootsie* in 1983. In the Seventies, the grainy wildlife film, dusted down from the BBC film archive, or the edifying travelogue about ballooning, was a common blight in front of the main feature. But the rise in the Eighties of the one-minute ad rang their death knell. At the time, they hardly seemed worth saving.

The shorts that are screened today are as sophisticated as the main feature. *Blink's* storyline is based around a baby elephant which sits on a kitchen table crying — a great, fat metaphor for the problems in a young couple's relationship. *Desserts* shows Ewan McGregor discovering a chocolate éclair on a beach, which he bites into — at his peril. Everyone in the industry knows that shorts do not make money — not for the exhibitors, the distributors, the



*Blink*, above, scripted by Amy Jenkins; and *Desserts*, with Ewan McGregor, below, have made it to the big screen



producers, least of all for the actors. So why are so many being made and why are some at last getting distributed?

"Shorts are like an apprenticeship," says Alex Johnson, the 27-year-old producer of *Blink*. "Most directors cut their teeth on shorts, from Guy Ritchie (*Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*) to Scorsese. But it is still more difficult to get a short film shown

than it is to raise the money to make it."

Johnson managed to get Film Four funding under the Short and Curly scheme, which functions as a hothouse for young film-makers and guarantees screening on BBC2 and Channel 4. The commission was a statutory £80,000 for which hundreds applied. It was good timing — *This Life* fever was at its height.

From the point of view of the distributor, Pathé, taking up *Blink* was a gamble. "We are interested in encouraging new talent and this is a good way to ensure their work gets seen," says Nick Hill, the managing director of Pathé, "but financially, shorts are not worth our while." (Notwithstanding the benefit of founding a good relationship with a new writer: Jenkins has been chosen, with Steve Coogan and John Hodgson, to write the screenplay for *Ma Vie en Rose*.)

Johnson has received a grant, jointly with the London Film and Video Development Agency, from the Arts & Every-one lottery scheme, to ensure that more short films get shown. Jill Robertson, the producer of *Desserts*, who is likely to be a beneficiary of the A&E fund, believes things are looking up. "Last year it was different. I had a huge struggle to get my short film *Magic Moments* (starring Dougray Scott), shown." (It finally went out with *Ma Vie en Rose*.)

From the outset with *Desserts*, she says, "we thought, 'lets get distributed', not 'lets make it and then see if we can get a distributor'."

Michael Wrenn, from Firesign, the short film collective backed by Levi Strauss, which helped to distribute *Desserts*, thinks part of the problem is that the makers of short films still have a lot to learn. "Most shorts are terrible. Either not properly funded or, as is often the case with film school graduates, too crowded."

Firesign has received a grant, jointly with the London Film and Video Development Agency, from the Arts & Every-one lottery scheme, to ensure that more short films get shown. Jill Robertson, the producer of *Desserts*, who is likely to be a beneficiary of the A&E fund, believes things are looking up. "Last year it was different. I had a huge struggle to get my short film *Magic Moments* (starring Dougray Scott), shown." (It finally went out with *Ma Vie en Rose*.)

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# Carlton and the loose connection

Something strange happened at the Independent Television Commission's press conference on Wednesday, held to announce how it would value the licence fees of 11 ITV franchises for the next ten years.

The result was great for GMTV, the loss-making commercial breakfast channel, not so good for Lord Hollick's United News and Media, and produced modest savings for Michael Green's Carlton Television in London. As journalists worried away at ITC predictions on the growth of digital television — 50 per cent penetration by 2008, including some, but not all, digital satellite homes — an unfamiliar figure at media press conferences asked a startling question. Was it not, the reporter asked, a case of putting the cart before the horse to offer Carlton a new licence when the ITC might have to remove its licence because of *The Connection* drug-trafficking programme and the Castro fiasco?

The journalist was Michael Gillard and the programme he was talking about were two Carlton documentaries that Gillard and a colleague, Laurie Flynn, both working for *The Guardian*, have denounced in front-page articles as fakes. The award-winning *Connection*, purporting to show the opening-up of a new drugs route from Colombia to London, is now the subject of a Carlton investigation under the supervision of independent lawyers. The ITC is indeed waiting for a final version of the report, expected within two weeks, before deciding what action to take.

The press conference question was, however, naive. There is no chance that Carlton will lose its licence because there is no evidence that anybody at Carlton headquarters was knowingly involved in faking anything. Against a background of growing controversy over what documentary film-makers get up to and where the lines of acceptable behaviour lie, the Carlton investigation report will be an important document.

The investigation is expected to find that there was a serious failure of compliance — the process that ensures that the rules of television are properly observed and that with factual programmes the viewer can rely on the fact that what they see is true — at Carlton. There is no doubt that in several cases viewers were misled by *The Connection*. In just one example a drug "mule" is seen swallowing what are alleged to be drugs. The

commentary says: "Within 24 hours he will be in London." He is then shown alighting at Heathrow the next morning. In fact, the flight took place months later and viewers were not told this. There are also allegations that the drug carriers were actors.

As usual, the truth is complex. At its heart is the researcher on the programme, Adriana Quintana, who was *The Guardian's* main source for its allegations. Unfortunately, there is evidence that Ms Quintana has said inconsistent and contradictory things and there seems to be no argument that she was in dispute with Carlton over money. She arrived at the company with a document shortly before transmission but the conversation, it is believed, was mainly about money.

When that dispute was resolved the document was not read in detail. Had it been, there is little doubt that Carlton would have taken a long, hard look at *The Connection* before airing it. Greater editorial scepticism might also have been in order: was it really likely that the No 3 in the Cali cartel would explain on camera how they planned to set up a drugs route into the UK?

The nature of the information in the report and in a *Hard News* special on the issue — to be broadcast by Channel 4 tomorrow at 8pm — suggests that the ITC is likely to fine Carlton and advise it to tighten its procedures. The programme looks not just at the journalism in *The Connection*, but also how *The Guardian* went about its investigation.

Although the programme will confirm many of *The Guardian's* main points, it finds that things are not as simple as the newspaper thinks, and that it didn't get everything right itself. One complaint is that *The Guardian* did not initially mention that there was some conflict of interests with one of the reporters involved. So I had better mention that my own connections include presenting the *Hard News* special.

As so often in human affairs, cock-ups are far more frequent and likely than deliberate mendacity, and so it is here. *The Guardian* is to be congratulated on pointing out the deficiencies in *The Connection* — much less so in denouncing a five-year-old documentary on Castro as a fake. It would have been even better, though, had it done its job with less hype and hyperbole, and without ascribing the worst-possible motives to all those involved.



Michael Gillard

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## Ads we

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COMMERCIAL radio revenue conti...  
its upward momentum, with figur...  
the third quarter of 1998 hit...  
1996 million up 11.5 per cent on 1997...  
The figures bring the total for the...  
months to September 1998 to £400 m...  
up 17.4 per cent year on year...  
The increasing revenue indicates th...



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entary says "Within 24 hours he will  
London." He is then shown alighting  
took place months later and viewers  
the drug carriers were actors  
usual the truth is complex. As it has  
researcher on the programme. Adri  
Quintana, who was *The Guardian's*  
evidence that Ms Quintana has  
and contradictory things  
dispute with Carlton over money. She  
before the commission but the document  
is believed to be mainly about money.  
that dispute was resolved the docu  
ment was not read in detail. Had it been  
there is little doubt that Carlton  
would have taken a long, hard  
look at it. The *Connection* before  
being broadcast editorially  
seems to have been in order  
to really likely that the  
BBC's camera would  
show how they  
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# And now for the serious news



Early gravitas: Trevor McDonald, left, who will be anchoring the *News at 6.30* on ITV, Kirsty Young, of Channel 5, centre, and Anna Ford from BBC1. Research suggests that television journalism has smartened up over the past five years

Coverage-hungry politicians and serious-minded viewers alike have been carping that the imminent disappearance of *News at Ten* from the schedules proffers a terminal dumbing down of ITV. News at 6.30, has an ominous ring, they argue; a procession of trivial tabloid tales worthy of the *Daily Sport*.  
On the face of it, the pessimists have a point. Early evening news bulletins are very different from their later siblings, designed to pull in and keep viewers for the channel over the rest of the peak-time schedule. Traditionally they are lighter, with fewer foreign stories and less "hard" political coverage. And yet, on the basis of our research, there may be hope: ITV appeared to have lifted its game significantly.  
Five years ago, prompted by the *Voice of the Listener and Viewer* (VLV), we carried out a "snapshot" analysis of one week's early evening news bulletins on BBC1, ITV, BBC Radio 4 and Sky News.  
Each item on each bulletin was timed and classified under one of 14 headings, from political and economic stories to crime, showbusiness or sport. We also sep-

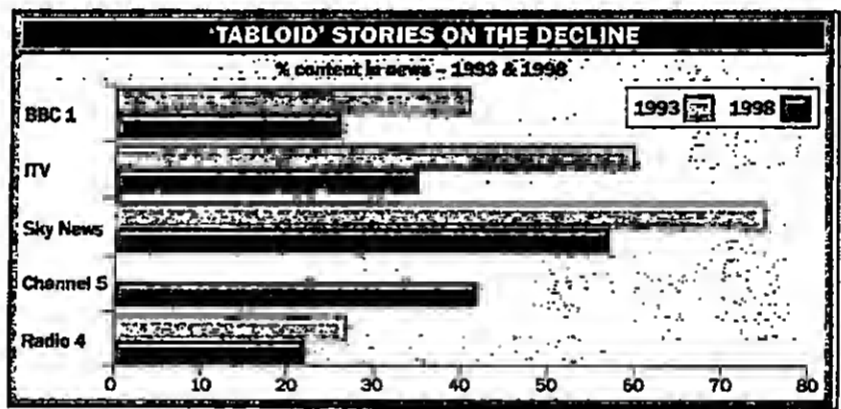
arated foreign from domestic stories. We then calculated the proportion of bulletins that each broadcaster devoted to "serious" issues — politics, business, economics or foreign stories — and how much time was used to cover "tabloid" stories — showbiz, sport, crime and royal affairs (in both senses).  
Our results fuelled fears that ITV was dumbing down. We found what seemed a clear divergence in news values between BBC1 and ITV. The latter focused more on tabloid stories at the expense of serious issues. The primacy of news had been sacrificed on the altar of audience figures.  
Five years on, amid the furor over *News at Ten*, VLV asked us to repeat the exercise. Again we logged early evening bulletins for the equivalent period — the first week in November — and the results were a surprise. In 1993, 60 per cent of ITV's early evening news items were tabloid, compared with 41 per cent for the BBC. But in 1998, both channels were devoting significantly less airtime to trivia. More impor-

tant, the gap between ITV and the BBC had fallen from 19 per cent to 9 per cent. The same was true in reverse for serious news coverage. In 1993, the BBC's early bulletin was broadcasting almost twice as many such stories as ITV. By 1998, not only had both channels increased such cov-

erage, but ITV had reduced the gap from 19 per cent to 5 per cent.  
To summarise these trends, we produced a "tabloidisation" index. By giving all serious stories a plus score and all tabloid items a minus, we can illustrate the changes across each channel. Our find-

ings show that, for the first week of this month at least, every channel and station had become more serious, and the gap between BBC and ITV had more than halved, to 14 per cent.  
It is also worth noting that Sky News doubled its serious content between the two analysis periods, and was only in deficit on our index because its early evening programme contains a substantial sports segment.

How should one explain these figures? Firstly, beware of any generalisations from analysis of just one week's coverage. Results will, of course, be influenced by exceptional items; not even the most determined practitioner of tabloid TV journalism could ignore pictures of the devastation wreaked in Central America by Hurricane Mitch. Also, there was significant coverage of two other foreign stories, the American mid-term elections and the crisis in Iraq. It is worth noting that neither had a strong visual content.  
We should beware of the dangers of any statistical analysis that relies on subjective classification of stories. Some — animals, royal state visits — are not easily categorised and attempts to quantify such news loses any distinction in the depth, quality or nature of coverage. Reports on the Queen's Speech, for example, could concentrate on the dramatised "war against the peers" or the implications of proposed legislation on the NHS.  
But even with all these caveats, this is still the only hard evidence of what might really be happening to TV news, and would seem to torpedo the gloomy prognosis offered by so many commentators.  
It may be possible that this research has uncovered a real shift in broadcast journalism: not just a convergence between the two main domestic news providers, but one at a more serious level. We might be able to conclude that TV journalism has not dumbing down, but smartened up.



## Ads won't help our beef

NO SOONER had the ban been lifted than the phone started ringing: what sort of advertising campaign should the meat industry run to convince European consumers that British beef was safe and desirable?  
It brought back memories of when the crisis first broke. What ads should the Government run? How could ads persuade us that beef was safe when the papers were full of such damaging stories and terrifying images of crazed cows dancing frenziedly in their pens?  
Then, as now, the answer is easy: no ads can. Dropping £10 notes from the skies over Berlin, Paris, Madrid and Rome (let alone London) might be a more cost-effective marketing device than advertising. There should be no advertising at all — not yet, anyway.  
Potential European consumers, fed on years of negative publicity from their own national media, are unlikely to suddenly change their minds about British beef just because of some slick ad campaign. If anything, conducted too soon, it may have a counter-productive effect.  
Advertising could so easily appear too cynical, too soon. Instead, an expensive, consistent, long-term consumer pub-

lic relations campaign needs to be conducted across the Continent, followed by a direct mail campaign to food retailers there. You can be sure that the national meat industries of our European partners will be searching hard to find any evidence whatsoever of new flaws in British beef's safety standards. They will conduct determined lobbying campaigns to protect their own industries, which have flourished as a result of the ban.  
One day of damaging front-page headlines and lead items on the evening news would negate the effects of a multi-million-pound ad campaign.  
Is it likely to happen? Just look at how the Germans tried to prevent the lifting of the ban this week.  
The political battle may have been won, but the marketing war for consumers' hearts and minds has just begun. If roles were reversed, Britain would do exactly the same.

Dunlop's "magician", and the InterCity "relax" films, is seldom out of the press on both sides of the Atlantic. Either he's taking out cryptic ads promoting his "genius", or he's promoting his idiosyncratic style of what he terms "hype art", or he's threatening to sue the American studio that gave him his Hollywood break and even sue the US Actors' Guild over his recently completed feature film *American History X* — despite its good reviews.  
Now Kaye has stunned the London ad industry by issuing a writ for £1 million alleging breach of contract and misappropriation of funds against three of his eponymous commercials production company.  
The writ against the trio — who all left the company this summer — claims unauthorised transfer of funds amounting to £241,174, misuse of credit cards to the tune of £430,000, and £400,000 in unexplained expenses.  
However, the three men — David Wardlaw, Graham Collins and Stephen Lepley —

refute the allegations as "non-sense". They say they will issue a counter claim for breach of contract, alleging financial irregularities within Kaye's businesses.  
But aside from the astonishing sums allegedly unaccounted for in what is a relatively small turnover business (£4 million to £6 million a year), it is some of the more salacious details of the dispute that have had minds boggling in Soho. Kaye's solicitors, Bird & Bird, claim that included in the unaccounted-for expenses is approximately £10,000 spent in a single night at a hostess bar called the Blue Angel. Wardlaw, as reported in *Company*, rejected the allegation, claiming the money had been repaid.  
Well, that's all right then! £10,000 in one night at a hostess bar? Who said the good old bad old days of advertising excess were over? The mercurial Kaye, who once won more than £600,000 in a dispute with Saatchi & Saatchi over a British Airways commercial, is likely to stop at nothing to win the case.  
As ever, the lawyers will be the only real winners, and the image of the ad industry will take yet another pounding.

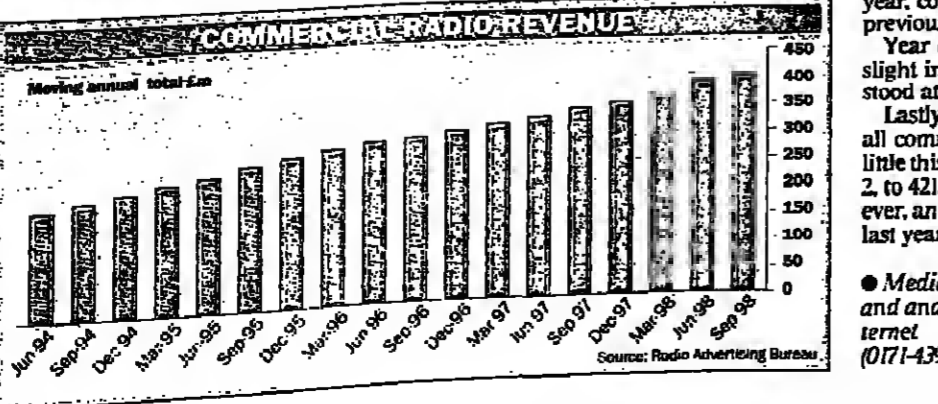


Stefano Hoffield is the Editor of Campaign

COMMERCIAL radio revenue continues its upward momentum, with figures for the third quarter of 1998 hitting £99.6 million, up 11.5 per cent on 1997. The figures bring the total for the 12 months to September 1998 to £400 million-plus — up 17.4 per cent year on year. The increasing revenue indicates that

radio has matured as an advertising medium. Share and reach cannot be expected to post hefty gains any longer, but clearly they do not need to in order for revenues to increase. Commercial radio claimed a 5.5 per cent share of all display advertising in Quarter 2 1998, according to Advertising Association figures.

Share of listening, however, showed a 0.1 per cent fall for all commercial radio year-on-year. That figure was dragged down by national stations, which lost 0.4 per cent of listening share, while local commercial, in fact, gained 0.9 per cent.  
Weekly reach for all commercial radio also showed a slight drop, falling to 58.7 per cent in the third quarter of this year, compared with 60.1 per cent in the previous quarter.  
Year on year, though, that reach is a slight improvement over Q3 1997, which stood at 58 per cent.  
Lastly, total adult listening hours for all commercial radio stations dropped a little this quarter, compared with Quarter 2, to 421,704 hours. This represents, however, an improvement on the same period last year of 3.6 per cent.



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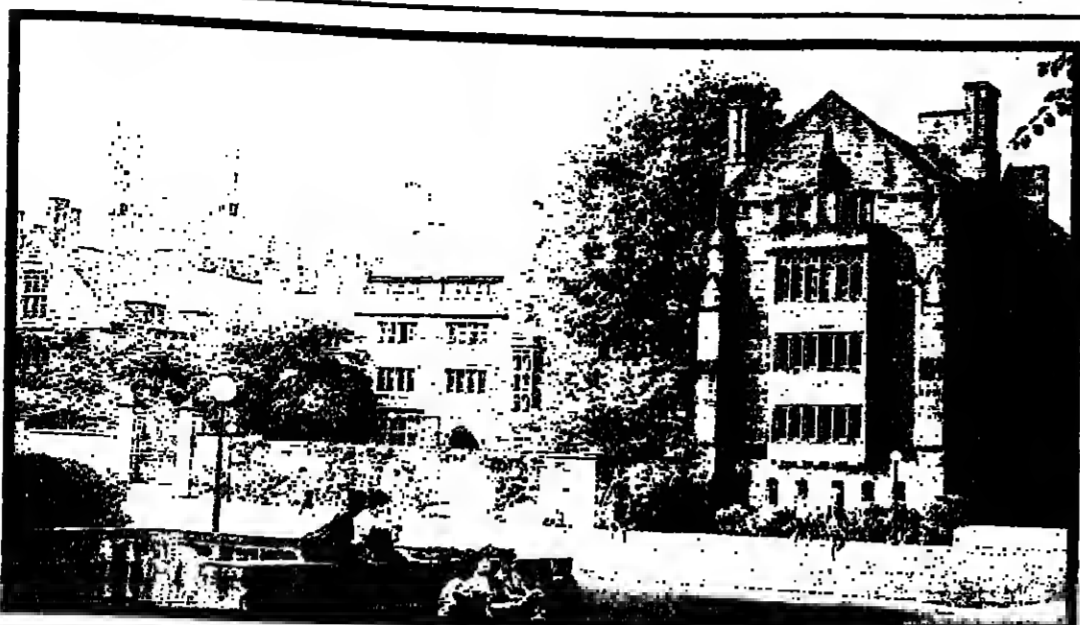
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# THE TIMES EDUCATION



Yale was in considerable financial disarray when Professor Levin became President

## Yale's key to world status

The leaders of arguably the two best universities in the world were in Oxford this week to be feted by their alma mater. Amid the pomp and nostalgia, they can only have been reassured that the balance of academic power has shifted decisively in their favour since they first saw the dreaming spires.

Professor Richard Levin, President of Yale University, and Professor Neil Rudenstine, his opposite number at Harvard, were students at Oxford more than 30 years ago. The unique ceremony that brought them both back to Britain to receive honorary degrees served as an occasion for polite ribbing about the rivalry between America's most famous universities.

The more tempting comparison from a British point of view, however, is with Oxford and Cambridge. Yale, in particular, has striking similarities with our ancient universities: almost 300 years old, it is tiny by American standards with only 5,300 undergraduates, divided into colleges on the Oxbridge model, a byword for academic excellence and a breeding-ground for the great and the good.

Running a world-class university is increasingly expensive, however, and here the transatlantic parallels stop. Oxford and Cambridge receive about £6,000 a year per undergraduate in grants and fees; Yale charges £18,000 a year for tuition, bed and board, and even that does not cover the full cost.

Professor Levin is too much of a diplomat to run down his old university. Before returning to New Haven, he insisted that "it is still the case that the leading universities in the United States regard Oxford and Cambridge as peer institutions". But he had to acknowledge that the funding gap made it increasingly difficult for the British universities to compete at the highest level of research.

Top academics, particularly in the sciences, demand high salaries and expensive facilities. Although Oxford and Cambridge have succeeded in luring some back from America — their current Vice-Chancellors are prime examples — the flow is mainly in the opposite direction. Yale has a number of prominent British academics on its staff, some recruited only this year.

The financial advantages that make this possible were already becoming established when Professor Levin was at Merton College at the

The economist who rescued an Ivy League college says universities must bring in more money. Interview by John O'Leary

end of the 1960s. "The US Government's generous funding for scientific enterprise in the years after the war gave us a very strong base on which to build," he says. "That infusion of resources has continued, with occasional bumps along the road, and we have been able to add to it ourselves."

The scale of the academic business, which all universities have become, is almost unimaginable on this side of the Atlantic. When Professor Levin took over the presidency in 1993, Yale was running a deficit of almost £11 million a year — about a third of the annual income of smaller universities in Britain at the time. He has since overseen a fundraising campaign, which has produced more than £1 billion, investing nearly £400 million in campus facilities.

Oxford raised £341 million in Britain's most successful academic appeal, which ended formally in 1994. It has since enjoyed some spectacular benefactions such as Waqif Said's £30 million gift for the business school that will bear his name, but the most optimistic fundraiser could not aspire to Yale's riches.

Professor Levin says: "We are fortunate even by American standards — only eight or ten institutions get

The funding gap makes it increasingly difficult for British universities to compete

such a large proportion of their revenue from gifts and endowments. But philanthropy is a much more powerful tradition in the United States. We never had this great dependence on the State that developed in Britain."

Half all Yale's graduates give money to the university each year, and almost three quarters did so during the five-year appeal. "Each generation of students feels an obligation to help the next, just as previous generations helped them," Professor Levin says.

Even so, the appeal was slow to get off the ground because Yale was in considerable disarray when Professor Levin became President. The Dean of the college (Yale's undergraduate hall) and Provost had resigned the previous year, as well as the President, and many graduates wondered if they would be pouring good money after bad. Many elegant campus buildings had fallen into disrepair and the university's place at the pinnacle of American higher education was under threat.

Professor Levin, an economist who had spent his entire working life at Yale, was chosen partly for the diplomatic skills he would need to drive through a programme of staffing cuts. But his financial strategy, implemented with the aid of one of America's most successful corporate investment managers, has left the university in a stronger position than reasonably could have been expected. The total endowment is up to £2.5 billion, the campus has been repaired and the university is ready for a new phase of development.

As a distinguished academic, Professor Levin does not want to be remembered merely as a "genial Mr Fix-it", as the university newspaper has dubbed him. His critics have accused him of lacking vision, but a high-powered team is now mulling over Yale's future direction.

Soon after his appointment, Professor Levin famously stood on a chair among his colleagues and shouted "I really love this place". When he held out successfully against expansion, there were those who feared that he loved it too much as it was. But growth is back on the long-term agenda, and he has plans to strengthen parts of the university "where we can make a difference".

These are likely to include the environmental sciences, where he believes that Yale could be a world



Professor Richard Levin famously stood on a chair and shouted to his colleagues: "I really love this place"

leader, with undergraduate programmes ripe for further development and policy research already strong. Greater involvement in distance education is also likely, mainly for professional development rather than undergraduate courses, and international activity is also earmarked for further expansion.

Not that Yale is in academic decline. It tied with Harvard and Princeton for top place in this year's rankings for undergraduate education, the quality of applicants is higher than ever and research income is growing rapidly. But the university remains in Harvard's shadow in terms of public profile.

"Harvard is much bigger, it has

greater depth of faculty and it is more visible internationally as a result," Professor Levin says. "That is one of the things we want to address."

Domestically, Yale's traditions and its high-profile graduates assure it of a place in the nation's consciousness. Three of the last five Presidents, including Bill Clinton, were educated there, and celebrity graduates such as Meryl Streep and Paul Newman attract those who recoil from politicians.

Yale does not suffer to anything like the same extent as Oxford and Cambridge do from an image of social exclusivity. The size of its endowment ensures that any appli-

cant who meets the stringent entry requirements can be supported financially, if necessary. More than 90 per cent of students receive some support, and the average debt on graduation is about £10,000 — a figure likely to be exceeded in Britain before long.

Professor Levin, who met a group of Vice-Chancellors in London during his visit, is convinced that the leading British universities will have to take the same route if they are to continue to compete with the best. "The current fees will not produce the money a top university needs, and I imagine that this will be an interim stage to a system more like the American one."

## Muddle over modular A levels

Coursework is overwhelming, says Susan Elkin

Modular courses are all the educational rage and next week's school league tables will underline again the advantages enjoyed by students taking modular A levels. Research has shown grades to be consistently higher than on traditional courses.

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, has decreed that he wants all A-level courses to become modular, with bite-sized chunks examined periodically during the course, culminating in a final grade. But has he thought about the practicalities?

I have just completed my first full cycle of teaching modular A-level English. The final grades were pleasingly high, but the continuous anxiety during the course led one student to remark: "The whole thing's been a nightmare."

Most pupils arrive in A-level classes at age 16, "just three years out of GCSE nappies", as a student once described it, and unless Lord Dearing's proposals for A-level reform are implemented, a change to this is unlikely. A-level examinations are set at the uniform standard designed for the end of the time-honoured two-year course. If you try to cram in a chunk of A-level work in the first term or two of year 12 and then enter students for the examination, a substantial number do badly. Has Mr Blunkett considered how demoralising this can be?

This is not the pupils' fault: most students would have sailed through, given another year. Of course, they can retake, but their initial failure leads to enormous distress.

Meanwhile, some students have excelled and are ready to move on. How does Mr Blunkett expect such mixed classes to be taught? Half are now working for two modules, and are having to do twice as much work as their peers — while the other half are forging ahead on a single new module.

The only way to make this work effectively would be almost to negotiate an individual learning programme with every student. But current A-level syllabuses are, mainly, theory-based and students need an abundance of the sort of information that comes largely from fairly traditional teaching. It would be impossible for me to ensure that enough knowledge is gained by students about, say, *Measure for Measure* without a great deal of whole-group, teacher-led discussion.

The same goes for my colleagues in the history department trying to teach, for instance, dictators of the 20th century, and for modern languages teachers working on vocabulary and grammar, not to mention the scientists and mathematicians.

Timetabling these modules is complex. Most schools have just continued as they have done for decades, allotting eight periods per week for each A-level subject. In practice, what happens is that a student might be taking several modular examinations during any one of the four exam sessions which fall in the two years. Naturally, this student's attention will be focused entirely on those examinations. The student will put all other work aside for quite long stretches and will be given — or simply take — study leave. Frequently in the past two years, my students have not produced homework, or have missed my lessons because of work for another subject's module. The time "lost" adds up to many weeks. Result? Some fall seriously behind.

In fact, the pattern of the school year doesn't fit modular arrangements. Exams are currently set biannually in January and June, so they don't even fall at the end of unbroken blocks of teaching time. If modules-for-all are to become a reality, we must move to a four or five-term year.

What price must students then pay for a rounded education? If you condemn them to two years of frenzied, near-continuous cramming, and the repeated resitting of examinations, when are they supposed to play in sports teams and to take part in plays? Such extracurricular activities are falling off, although they are prized by future employers and by universities.

We need dramatically different kinds of syllabuses which can be learnt in a much more ad hoc way. The concept of school education being a group of young people shut in a room with a teacher for a fixed time — at least at post-16 age group — will probably have to go. So will the traditional three-term year and long, unevenly spaced holidays. At present we are trying to ram a square peg into a round hole, and the cracks are beginning to show.

## Why children must learn to make it

We all know about the merits of academic success at school. Pupils are coaxed towards what is commonly believed to be the pinnacle of their school careers — GCSEs and then A levels. But throughout Britain, the familiar anguish of factory managers is "We are desperate for bright, practical kids — why can't the schools deliver them any more?" At the same time, careers teachers can be heard to tell their pupils: "I know you love making things but if you want to be an engineer, it's got to be maths and physics A level, not design and technology."

This week the Crafts Council held a conference to present the findings of "Learning Through Making", its two-year investigation examining the benefits of craft-based experience at every stage of education. The controversial challenge was to emphasise to policymakers in education and industry just how vital it is to devise a national curriculum that timetable the development of creative and practical skills.

The academic anti-practical work ideology pervades our education system and much of society. Our economy pays the price as foreign cars dominate our roads and refits of the QE2 and other such contracts go abroad. "In the next century, creativity and knowledge will be the key tools," Tony Blair has acknowledged, "and Britain has always been a world leader in creativity and innovation." But results show that none given to these skills is inadequate.

The research was undertaken at Loughborough, Middlesex and Sheffield Hallam Universities. The concept of "craft" was far

Pupils without a practical education are missing out. John Eggleston reports

wider than even the Crafts Council had expected. It ranged from sophisticated cookery, vintage train restorations through to major industrial activity on film sets. Like all good research, the results accord with common sense — the hope is that added legitimacy will guarantee improvement.

Middlesex University's results, based on interviews with more than a thousand employees, teachers and pupils across the South East of England, showed unanimous enthusiasm for intelligent and practical education. They showed enhanced employability and commitment to personal relationships. Those involved with crafts and practical skills were definitely not found to be problem children or problem workers.

One of the key findings was that there is a desperate shortage of workers with basic practical competence, and now many young people face unemployment because they lack any practical skills. Children enjoy making things at school and are keen to do more until, sadly, they are seduced by the academic values of the education system. Many pupils are unable to respond to these values and so are destined to be considered as low achiev-

ers. The research also confirms what many teachers already know — that a programme of practical activities enhances the capabilities of most children in the basic subjects: English, maths and science. The Government has abandoned obligatory design, technology and art in primary schools and is reducing it in the 13-plus age group.

Further on, the students who do persevere and graduate in practical design-related studies find themselves well-placed in key economic activities, ranging from modelling prostheses and car prototypes to designing sets for *Titanic*. But even they may experience a spell of unemployment or part-time working before senior management is willing to recognise and engage their talent. The Crafts Council research also painted a wider picture, demonstrating the huge public enthusiasm for practical creativity involving adult leisure activity, ranging from basic DIY to highly skilled craft activities. Much of the enjoyment was seen to spring from beginnings achieved in school although often regarded as frustratingly insufficient.

The results of the Crafts Council initiative are being circulated and hopefully read widely, especially at senior management and policy level. It is vital that they are, because sadly, this may be the Crafts Council's swansong as an independent body. It faces absorption and possible dispersion within the Arts Council under a government reorganisation.

● The author is Professor of Education at the University of Warwick



Competence building: technology studies at Lyndhurst School in Borehamwood







CRICKET

# West Indies dig deep after initial struggle

FROM THRASY PETROPOULOS IN JOHANNESBURG

**THE WANDERERS** (first day of five; West Indies won toss): West Indies have scored 249 for seven wickets against South Africa

WEST INDIES were indebted to an innings of typical grit and resolve from Shivnarine Chanderpaul to deflect attention once again from matters off the field, after a rampant Shaun Pollock had threatened to make their first day of Test cricket in South Africa one that they would wish to forget. A day of immense historical importance at The Wanderers could scarcely have begun on a less auspicious note. First, Pat Rousseau, president of the West Indies Cricket Board, recounted the events of two days ago when, with his wife and a Jamaican journalist, he was robbed at gunpoint as he visited a cricket ground in Soweto. Shortly afterwards came a statement by Dr Ali Bacher, managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, expressing his disappointment that "no players of colour had been selected to represent South Africa".

The West Indies sprung a surprise by naming Rawl Lewis, the leg spinner, in their side. Lewis had arrived in Johannesburg as a replacement for the injured Dinanath Ramnarine at 7.30 yesterday morning, somewhat less than fresh after an overnight flight from Bombay, where he had been touring with the A team.



Chanderpaul's grit

By winning the toss, Brian Lara was able to elect to bat first, allowing Lewis time to rest. There is nothing restful, however, in an opening partnership between Clayton Lambert and Philo Wallace. Within eight overs and after a flurry of drives and pulls, both batsmen had been dismissed by Pollock. Lambert aimed a cavalier swipe and edged behind; Wallace lost his off stump prodding forward.



Lara, the West Indies captain, is comprehensively bowled by Pollock after winning the toss and electing to bat

Lara briefly suggested the occasion would be marked by an innings of majesty. Before he had time to settle, however, he was bowled by Pollock off an inside edge, tentatively pushing forward.

Had Pollock, who boasted figures of three for 14 at this stage, soon afterwards been able to take a difficult caught-and-bowled chance off Carl Hooper before he had scored, there is every chance that West Indies' batting would have capitulated.

The chance went to ground and, in the next 31 overs, Hooper, batting for most of the time with a runner after damaging a groin when he slipped playing forward defensively to Kallis, and Chanderpaul added 91 runs.

The secret to Chanderpaul's success is a simple one. He is West Indies' most adhesive batsman and plays strictly within his limitations. When the ball was drifting marginally down the leg side, he would step across and help it on its way to fine leg. When the bowlers overpitched, he opted to

drive to the off-side boundary. A square-driven four off Allan Donald took him to his sixteenth Test half-century in 124 balls.

By that stage, though, Hooper had departed, well caught at slip by Cullinan off Donald, and Chanderpaul went into his shell. His next 86 balls brought him only 24 runs before, playing back, he was leg-before to Donald.

Hooper's willingness to take on Donald was entertainment in itself and, four times in two overs, he dispatched him to the boundary. A lazy stroke, though, cost him his wicket.

Stuart Williams, originally chosen in the West Indies squad as the third opener, batted resourcefully in scoring 35 at No 6 before becoming David Terbrugge's first Test victim, and the new ball accounted for Ridley Jacobs, caught at mid-wicket pulling at Kallis, but not before he and Nixon McLean had added 37. Lewis kept McLean company to the close as West Indies, who mostly underperformed, began to struggle free.

## Brotherly love lost in Kentish towns

THE Band of Brothers, the wandering club that has had a considerable influence over decision-making within Kent cricket, has been cited by a long-serving former player as responsible for the dismissal of Steve Marsh from the captaincy last month (see Tennis writes). Bob Wilson has resigned from the cricket committee in protest.

The Band of Brothers was revived by Lord Harris in 1880 as a nursery of the county's amateur cricket. It elects prominent Men of Kent and Kentish Men on a social as well as a cricketing basis and is regarded with suspicion by some of the players.

The Kent cricket committee includes prominent players such as Derek Underwood, who was abroad when the decision to dismiss Marsh was taken, and Mike Den-

ness, who is thought to have had his reservations over it. The appointment of Matthew Fleming as captain for 1999 was made by the general committee after consultations with the cricket committee, chaired by Derek Upton.

Wilson, who played for Kent in the 1950s and 1960s, did not attend the meeting of the cricket committee on account of being Marsh's father-in-law. He has resigned, criticising what he perceived to be outside pressure.

David Kemp, the chairman of Kent, said: "To suggest the Band of Brothers is behind this change and that there is a split is ludicrous. Steve has said he would be happy to play under Matthew Fleming. It is rare for county captains to serve for more than three years now. The job seems to be more pressurised."

HOCKEY

## Kerly back to haunt his former colleagues Doncaster prepare for testing period

By SYDNEY FRISKIN

By CATHY HARRIS

SEAN KERLY reflected yesterday on the period when he was a key figure in Southgate's successes. Fresh from his Olympic gold-medal triumph in Seoul in 1988, the high-scoring centre forward helped Southgate to win the National League title in their inaugural year. Earlier, with his assistance, they won the National Club Championship, now known as the EHA Cup, five times between 1982 and 1988.

Now, as manager of Canterbury, Kerly takes his unbeaten team and league leaders to his old club on Sunday for a key match in the National League premier division. "This is an important game and, if we win, it will put a lot of space between ourselves and the other teams in the top four," he said.

Southgate, who are second and were beaten 2-0 by Cannock last week, know that they must not concede possession easily through sloppy passing against a team that is strong in firepower. In seven matches, Canterbury have scored 32 goals compared with 20 by Southgate. Each side has conceded 13.

Cannock, the title-holders, visit East Grinstead, who had mixed fortunes in a double-header programme last weekend. A 6-4 victory over Teddington was followed by a 4-3 defeat at Bourneville.

Reading, who picked up only one point from their two matches, are hoping to restore their fortunes in a home match against Old Loughtonians, for whom Scott-Smith, a Canadian centre forward, is the season's leading scorer with 14 goals.

Guildford are attempting to pick up the pieces this week after their 9-1 trouncing by Teddington last Sunday. This weekend they are at home to Bourneville and Ian Jennings, their player-coach said: "We are back in the war zone. Someone has got to pay for our embarrassment."

IT IS bad enough fighting a perennial struggle against relegation, but Doncaster approach their midwinter break with tough matches against Hightown, their northern rivals, and a rescheduled match against Slough, the Women's National League premier division champions, on Sunday.

The good news is they are not propping up the table. Raye Allen, the manager, thinks that the Yorkshire team is playing well. "We've given a good account of ourselves, only to concede goals at silly times," she said.

One point separates Doncaster from Sutton Coldfield at the bottom and the club has no local source of promising young players. Allen said: "The nearest good hockey school is an hour away. We'd love to be able to draw on a wealth of local talent."

Claire Ferguson, the captain and striker, and Karen O'Neill, a defender, are respected stalwarts, while Janelle Lowe, the midfield player, is turning in much-improved displays. One useful acquisition is Sally Wright, a Leeds University student and England Under-21 player.

Allen confesses that team spirit and good old Yorkshire grit helps to keep the side in the top flight. The thought of challenging the top four is a luxury, she says. "It's exciting taking on the best, but we're also under continual pressure to maintain our status."

Boosted by the sponsorship of Apollo Travel, the team can at least count on travel expenses being met. After entertaining Hightown, they head down the M1 to Southgate, where they meet Slough. The champions are still smarting after suffering their first defeat in 20 months when they lost to Ipswich last week. "It will be a matter of hard work and some luck," Allen said.

SCOREBOARD FROM THE WANDERERS

WEST INDIES: First Innings		FALL OF WICKETS: 1-17, 2-24, 3-41, 4-132, 5-177, 6-198, 7-235.	
C B Lambert c Boucher b Pollock	8	BOWLING: Donald 20-3-83-2; Pollock 20-4-81-2; Kallis 19-5-37-1; Terbrugge 18-5-32-1; Cronje 1-0-3-0; Symcox 18-4-37-0.	
P A Wallace b Pollock	16	SOUTH AFRICA: G Kirsten, A M Bacher, J H Kallis, D J Cullinan, W J Cronje, J N Fraser, S M Pollock, M V Boucher, P L Symcox, A A Donald, D J Terbrugge.	
S Chanderpaul b Donald	74	Umpires: C J Mitchell (South Africa) and D R Shepherd (England).	
C L Hooper c Cullinan b Donald	44		
S C Williams c Cronje b Terbrugge	25		
R D Jacobs c Cronje b Kallis	14		
N A M McLean not out	23		
R N Lewis not out	11		
Basis (lb, w, 2, nb 5)	13		
Total (7 wickets)	249		
C E L Ambrose and C A Walsh to bat.			

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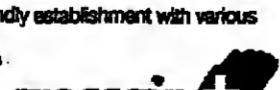
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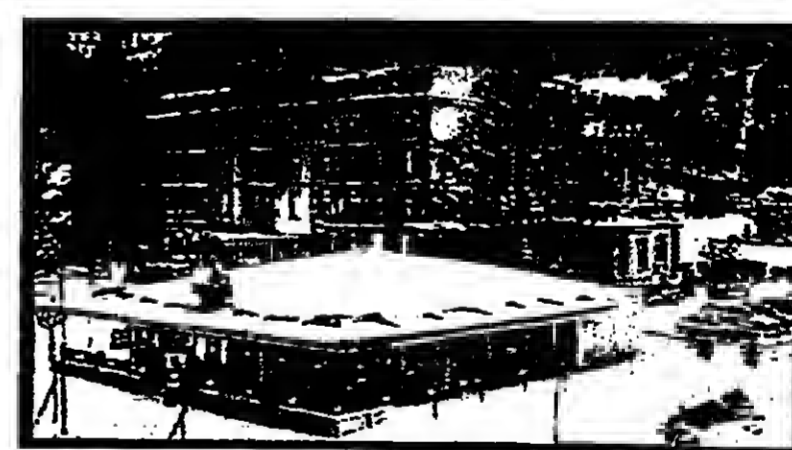


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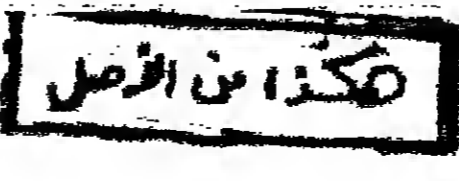
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CHANGING TIMES



THE TIMES  
**SNOOKER**  
Harold continues to rack up points

Harold... continues to rack up points... (The rest of the text is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the image quality and angle.)

NETBALL

Late rally hope for f

By CATHY HARRIS... (The rest of the text is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the image quality and angle.)

BASKETBALL

... (The rest of the text is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the image quality and angle.)

BOWLS

... (The rest of the text is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the image quality and angle.)

CRICKET

... (The rest of the text is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the image quality and angle.)

FOOTBALL

... (The rest of the text is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the image quality and angle.)

HOCKEY

Doncaster prepare for testing period

Doncaster Hockey Club are preparing for a testing period...

SNOOKER

Harold continues to rack up points

Harold continues to rack up points in the snooker tournament...



Angelopoulos, pictured celebrating winning the 2004 Olympic Games for Athens, was typically persuasive when taking to the rostrum yesterday

Woman's touch wins the day

Those who still believe that this is a man's world could not have been listening attentively in Huntingdon...

Rob Hughes reports on the contrast provided by two lofty individuals with similarly ambitious goals

A rough diamond from the East End of London, a smooth lady from the Greek islands...

"I'm not prepared to tolerate the terrible imbalance of the waste of resources of ethnic minorities and women," he said...

One month before the vote in Lausanne, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) staged its world athletics championships in Athens...

David Bryant met his match in the UK indoor singles championship yesterday, beaten in straight sets by Paul Foster...

BOWLS

Bryant can hold his head high in defeat

David Bryant met his match in the UK indoor singles championship yesterday, beaten in straight sets by Paul Foster...

SPORT IN BRIEF

Olympic oarsmen turn up the heat

Britain's leading Olympic oarsmen travel to the Gold Coast, Australia, today for a warm-weather training camp...

NETBALL

Late rally offers hope for future

The England 2000 squad could wrap up the three-match series against South Africa Under-21 when they meet at Crystal Palace tomorrow...

ICE SKATING

Judges applaud rule changes

The judging of ice dance, recently described by an insider as being previously "a bit like art with every judge knowing what they liked, but not having any clear guidelines on how to mark it," seems to be making advances here this week...

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FOR THE RECORD

Table with sports results: BASKETBALL, BOWLS, CRICKET, FOOTBALL.

Table with sports results: RYMAN LEAGUE, HIGHLAND LEAGUE, AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION, POINTS LEAGUE, SOUTHERN JUNIOR FLOODIT CUP, NORTH WESTERN TENNIS, SCOTTISH LEAGUE.

Table with sports results: THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP, THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP, THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP.

Table with sports results: ICE HOCKEY, NATIONAL LEAGUE, WOMEN'S UNDER-18 INTERNATIONAL MATCH, SNOOKER, TENNIS.

Table with sports results: GOLF, BRISBANE Australian Players championship.

in-Fri 9am to 5pm

Champions' League: Ferguson awaits critical fixture while Arsenal reflect on ill-starred campaign

United regret overindulgence

By OLIVER HOLT FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

GUILT, perhaps, is too strong a word for it, but something akin to regret descended on Barcelona and Manchester United yesterday, like indigestion gripping a glutton. The fantasy was wonderful, intoxicating stuff while it lasted in the Nou Camp stadium on Wednesday night, but yesterday both teams were facing the reality that a 3-3 draw was not the result that either of them wanted.

It was worse for Barcelona, of course, whose chances of qualifying for the quarter-finals had been finally snuffed out. "A century without Europe," the mournful headline in *El Periodico* said. The club's 100th birthday celebrations will not seem the same without the chance to gild them with the European Cup.

GROUP D table with columns P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts and rows for Bayern Munich, Man Utd, Barcelona, and Brondby.

United's reaction was more equivocal. There was bound to be pleasure in a performance that was among their most thrilling in European competition and so nearly turned into their best away victory for three decades. They were vibrant, skilful and flowing and their forwards, Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole, tore the Barcelona defence to shreds. Nor should it be forgotten that they have already outlasted Barcelona in the toughest of all the groups in the Champions' League, that they have defied the doubters who said that they would be exposed by the might of the Spanish giants. They have proved that they can mix it with the elite of Europe.

However, their inability to protect a lead has cost them dearly already this season and the same weakness afflicted them twice more on Wednesday night, when other teams might have stifled the match and the magnificence of Rivaldo, Barcelona's Brazil midfielder player, and secured the result. If it seems graceless and



Yorke, who was in magnificent form, celebrates after scoring his second goal, with a header, against Barcelona. Photograph: Marc Aspland

parsimonious to criticise United for any part of their display, the fact remains that, for all the unparalleled entertainment they have offered in Europe this season, everyting rests on their sixth and last group match, against Bayern Munich on December 9.

If United win, they will go through to the last eight. If they lose, they will not. If they draw, it should just be enough to secure the second of the two best runners-up places.

The first is likely to be claimed by either Real Madrid or Internazionale, of group C, but there is also a danger that Galatasaray and Rosenborg, from group B, might both outdo Alex Ferguson's side. If Juventus beat the Turks in Istanbul next Wednesday, a point against Bayern Munich will almost certainly see United through.

It is still impossible to quell a feeling of unease about the game against the Germans, though. Memories of United's failure to overtake Borussia Dortmund in the semi-final second leg two years ago are still raw and painful. Only a one-goal victory was needed to beat AS Monaco at Old Trafford in the quarter-finals last season, but United could not achieve it. Then there is the small matter of the hold that German teams seem to have over English teams.

"We do believe we can beat Bayern," Jaap Stam, the United defender, said. "But the German teams are always tough because they come back at you. Sometimes you play them and you think you are winning in the game, but then they come back at you. They are very strong that way. We have seen it before with

their national team in European championships and World Cups where it did not look like the Germans would make it. Sometimes you think they are not going to do well, but they nearly always seem to get there in the end. "Because of all that, this

match will require 100 per cent concentration from us. A draw may be enough but I am not sure how the other groups are. It would be better for us to win and come first in the group rather than have to think about other teams and hope they might do us a favour. We have got to win to make sure."

It would be a surprise if Ferguson repeats his bold experiment of playing Wes Brown instead of Phil Neville at right back. For all Brown's attacking flair, he was caught out of position too often and found it hard to cope with the running and skills of Zenden. Ferguson's willingness to attack Barcelona must be admired, but it is hard to escape the feeling that with the younger Neville in the side, resistance to the Catalan fightback might have been stiffer.

Ferguson: light-hearted



Barcelona manager, mused afterwards that Rivaldo might have found less space if David Beckham had not played in quite as wide a role, but against the Germans, when Ryan Giggs may have been restored to the side, it is likely United will go for their opponents' throats again.

In Yorke and Cole, they have two strikers playing at the top of their game. Barcelona singularly failed to cope with their pace and guile and Otmar Hitzfeld, the Bayern coach, will have to make their containment his priority.

For Ferguson, their excellence is merely a cause of merit. "Would you pick Andy Cole if you were England manager," someone asked him after the match. "If I was England manager," Ferguson said in his broadest Scottish accent, "they'd be relegated."

At any other club, such tight economies would almost certainly have led to a rift between board and manager, but not at Arsenal. Indeed, it was Wenger who insisted that there was no need for a knee-

jack reaction as the dust began to settle on his team's lurid European Cup campaign — which still has to take in a trip to Panathinaikos. "Now is a bad time to take decisions," he said. "We need to sit down and think."

The reaction from Arsenal supporters to that news will, of course, be one of horror. They will have wanted to hear that a bid for Alan Shearer had been faxed to Newcastle before the lights went off at Wembley on Wednesday night. Or that rumours of Nwankwo Kanu's imminent arrival from Internazionale

Wenger will not resort to panic buys

By MATT DICKINSON

FOR all the relentless clamour for Arsène Wenger to spend his millions by tea-time, there is not a whole lot wrong with Arsenal that three weeks in the Bahamas could not put right. It was not so long ago, after all, that Highbury's best XI made mugs of Manchester United.

Dennis Bergkamp could rest his right calf on a sun lounger, while Patrick Vieira's hamstring is eased to fitness in the ocean. Nicolas Anelka could do with the time to remind himself that top-class strikers do not always have to score top-class goals. And then there is Marc Overmars, for whom a holiday cannot come soon enough.

All they need is a break, but instead Arsenal's collection of wounded, aged and dejected were up at the training ground yesterday striving to be fit as soon as possible. Knocked out of the Champions' League at a hopelessly premature stage by a 1-0 defeat to Lens on Wednesday night, they can scarcely afford to lose ground in the FA Carling Premiership, so the pressure is on for the players to return. And quickly.

There is little other option because the word from Highbury yesterday was that, while the team is creaking and groaning under the strain, the directors are standing as stubborn as ever. They will not even in the wake of the disappointment at Wembley, abandon their policy of sensible husbandry, however many international stars they have to reject.

Even some of the Arsenal players appear to be calling for back-up, with Martin Keown confronting the subject head on yesterday. "The problem is that the Arsenal first XI picks itself," he said. "Manchester United and Chelsea can spin their players around and still have good players in most positions. It is hard for our lads to just come in, step up to another level and perform better than the players they have replaced."

Wenger, though, continues to frustrate hopes of reinforcements, and those of us who have marvelled at his astute management since his unheralded arrival from Japan can only assume that he knows exactly what he is doing as he waits for players he believes can match the desire of those he already has in the dressing-room. It is the policy of a brave man, who believes he can soldier through. He will not be rushed. With his record, nor should he be.

Indeed, they will have been desperate for any upbeat news at all.

GROUP E table with columns P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts and rows for Dynamo Kiev, Lens, Panathinaikos, and Arsenal.

were based on solid evidence. Indeed, they will have been desperate for any upbeat news at all.

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Murray calms the nerves

By GEORGE CAULKIN

WITHIN minutes of senior British football's last remaining unbeaten record coming to an unexpected end last Saturday, telephone lines were beginning to hum to the tremulous tones of Worried from Wearside and Frustrated from Fulwell. Sunderland lead the Nationwide League first division by five points, yet the radio was reverberating with the words of their nervous supporters.

If the improbable plot-line awarded to the club over the past four seasons — near-relegation, promotion, relegation, agony in the play-offs — makes in-built fatalism a forgivable by-product, the main topic of conversation among the more vociferous of England's biggest crowd after the 3-2 defeat to Barnsley was a little more tangible.

It amounted to money. It is always money. On the airwaves and in the local letter pages, they ask when Sunderland will demonstrate a similar ambition in the transfer market as that which conceived and constructed the Stadium of Light? When will Peter Reid's hunger for success translate itself into prominent signings?

Linked with Duncan Ferguson on Monday, they signed Gavin McCann for £500,000 from Everton yesterday. Any concern at this perceived parsimony is swamped away by Bob Murray, the club chairman. The question is a familiar one: he gets it as often as being told by well-wishers that Sunderland will definitely go up this time. Inquiries about new players



Murray: carefully plotting future

are directed to Reid who, Murray says, "runs everything to do with the playing side — in totality".

Murray is far more disturbed by an injury list that he describes as "horrendous". Kevin Phillips, the leading goalscorer last season, has not played for more than two months, Michael Gray, the left back, has missed three matches and Iain Clark has only just returned to the team after breaking a fibula.

That trio cost less than £3 million; if McCann has a similar impact, few will complain. Well, actually, they almost certainly will. "We're a pie and we're very visual," Murray said. "What we have, we have and what we haven't, we haven't. It's there for everybody to see, our wealth and

wellbeing. We're a public company. Peter knows his parameters and he works within them. He knows we won't let him down, so we've got to provide him with the resources he sees as appropriate."

Those requirements could rise substantially should Sunderland ascend to the FA Carling Premiership this season. Murray admits that "two of the three teams coming down consistently doesn't really augur well" and, even last year, senior players were talking in terms of heavy investment. Aware of this, the club will increase the capacity of its stadium by a further 6,000 should they win promotion, climbing to a possible 64,000 if England host the 2006 World Cup.

"It's a three-phase development and would form a complete wraparound," Murray said. "It would depend on us getting to the Premiership, retaining our status, the demand being there for more seats and the World Cup. Those three things would determine the three phases, but we would like to extend the ground if we can."

Yesterday, the club unveiled revised plans for a new football academy. After losing to Charlton on penalties in the play-off final in May — "It was like a betrayal" — there is little excuse for complacency. The chairman points to the record number of women season-ticket holders, to the fact that the Football Task Force referred to the club as "a blueprint". This, he says, "is the new Sunderland". Those who remember its older incarnation may require still more convincing.

Shearer pleased about Ferguson

By STEPHEN WOOD

ALAN SHEARER, of Newcastle United, gave his approval yesterday to the club's £7 million signing of Duncan Ferguson, the forward, from Everton. "It is a fantastic signing and if we can play together, which I am sure we can, there should be one or two goals," the England captain, who hopes to have recovered from a hamstring injury in time for the visit of Wimbledon tomorrow, said. "Duncan is a big name and I hope we can now bring the club the success that it deserves."

Liverpool expect to complete the signing of Jean-Michel Ferré today, the first acquisition by Gerard Houllier as sole manager of the club. If the defensive midfielder player passes a medical, he will leave Istanbulspor, the Turkish club, for £1.7 million.

Ferré, 29, has played for France five times and has said a transfer to Liverpool would be his "dream move".

Southampton are expected to sign Joey Beauchamp, the Oxford United winger, subject to a medical. The Nationwide League first division club need to sell a player to stave off the threat of closure. Howard Kendall, the former manager of Everton, is returning to management with Jerez, the Spanish second division club. Kendall has already had two successful years in Spain, in charge of Athletic Bilbao.

The transfer of Carlton Palmer to Barnsley has collapsed because Darren Barnard, the Barnsley winger who was the other half of the swap deal, has failed to agree terms with Southampton.

Everton handed awkward test

By JOHN GOODBODY

EVERTON, the holders, were drawn away to Manchester United yesterday in the third round of the FA Youth Cup. The match will be the tie of the round in a competition that has been a proving ground for players such as George Best, Paul Gascoigne, Ryan Giggs and David Beckham in the past 47 years.

Garth Barry, 17, the Aston Villa central defender, played in the tournament last season and has made a considerable impact in the FA Carling Premiership this season. Barry made the draw for the third round of the competition, which has been restructured this season. It now has a similar format to the FA Cup, with the larger clubs only taking part from the third round.

The 20 Premiership and 24 Nationwide League first



division clubs were thrown together yesterday with the 20 clubs who have survived the qualifying rounds. Barry drew his club to play at home to Hull City. Last season Villa were beaten 4-2 at home by Notts County. "It was the biggest game I'd played for Villa, with several thousand in the ground," Barry said.

Draw, page 51

Advertisement for Dell computers. Title: Two Great Systems. Three Years Service and Support. Features: Dell Dimension V400 and Dell Dimension XPS R450. Includes specifications for processors, RAM, hard drives, monitors, and speakers. Price: £1,079 (£1,308.95 inc. VAT). Finance: DFS 3 YEAR PERSONAL FINANCE: £50.38PM APR 26.9%.

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# Honest Henry helps to create nation's new mood

In a television interview before his first match as coach of Wales, Graham Henry, while not giving much away apart from the fact that he possesses a dry sense of humour, was asked to outline any weaknesses in the South Africa team. He answered, straightforwardly, that he did not think there were any. "I think they're very, very good together. The best team in the world," he said. This is revealing in the sense that few, if any, coaches would care to admit that they were unable to detect any flaws in the opposition. To discover aspects of vulnerability and so project their own tactical perspicacity, whether bullish or merely fanciful, goes with the coach's territory. Henry, refreshingly, made no such claims.

us feel the need to express a level of wisdom not given to others. For their own sense of authority, coaches need to undermine the opposition, falsely or not, and in so doing hope to raise their own good name. In addition, when faced with a powerful reputation such as that of South Africa, to give succour and comfort, however temporary or imaginary, forms part of the pastoral care he affords those who are next in the line of fire. There is a strong urge to justify themselves and in the world beyond. Having admitted to detecting the supposed defects, there are coaches, upon being asked to reveal their secrets, who would, with a wink and a nudge, admit no more.

are not the only ones to dissemble in this way. Sport is largely about the supremacy of ideas and skill; very rarely of waffle, though many have tried and fallen in the attempt to make it seem so. Henry says it as it is: New Zealanders rarely bluff where rugby is concerned. So for his purposes, if he could not discover any weaknesses, he would say so and so he did. This suggests a degree of confidence not always given to coaches: a deeply insecure breed. New Zealanders are rarely prone to public display of euphoria, either. So it may be that he cannot quite understand, in the context of a loss and a win in two games, the sudden outbreak of celebration in Wales. The past two Mondays, after the previous Saturday's spectacular events, have been as they once were: there was a spring in the step of the nation as off to work it went.



Gerald Davies  
Rugby Union Commentary

ed all Wales teams of the past decade or the sense of play being determined beforehand, of players restrained. There has been not a little freedom in both the Wales performances and a lot of belief that they can play the attacking game confidently with the ball in hand. The ball, in fact, was in play for 42 minutes against South Africa, when the normal expectation is around the 30-minute mark. It is too early for any proper judgement — that will have to wait until the final game of the Five Nations Championship — but the evidence so far is of a Welsh game liberated of its straitjacket. This, more than anything, has given rise to the recent sense of joy in rugby.

of a kind expected, in certain circumstances, of a fly half. In truth, Howarth is the player, from full back, who adds the extra dimension that provides rhythm to the team with an attacking spirit. To take fuller advantage of his exciting interventions, however, Wales need wingers with the speed of the 100 metres sprinter, not those of the 400 metres. Fine and important though their performances have been hitherto, both James and Thomas are in the mould of the latter, neither having the 100-metre sprinter's capacity to be swift enough off the mark and to be up to speed in the first ten metres; nor indeed to change pace quickly enough. Because of this, precious chances created by Howarth may go astray.

For all this potential, the dilemma for Wales comes from the realisation that ten players — it would have been 11 but for Scun Quinnell's recent change of clubs — belong in teams who are not in the Welsh Rugby Union's league. Only Llanelli and Pontypridd of the Welsh League clubs have any representation. Cardiff and Swansea, the so-called rebel clubs who play English Allied Dunbar Premiership teams, have eight. For Henry to have any chance of building on the foundation he has laid, Welsh rugby needs to have a coherent structure. The establishment of four super-clubs is proposed, but this can only have a chance of succeeding if there is a British league in place. This, as yet, is far from being so. Henry must hope that he is not building a foundation on sand.

**"There is a strong urge to justify themselves"**

**"There has been none of that sense of inhibition"**

## Baron puts change at top of agenda

By David Hands  
Rugby Correspondent

THE game in England, which has meandered from crisis to crisis since the advent of professionalism, must pick up the pace of change in much the same way as the national side must do tomorrow against Australia at Twickenham. Francis Baron, the new chief executive of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), called yesterday for a resolution to the stand-off with leading clubs and a far more effective administration by the union itself.

## SRU under fire as Irvine and Jeffrey resign

By Alasdair Reid

ANDY IRVINE yesterday resigned as chairman of the Scottish Rugby Union's (SRU) international game board, launching a withering attack on the governing body and, in particular, Duncan Paterson, its executive chairman. It was as dramatic an off-field occasion as any in the history of Scottish rugby. Irvine, the former Scotland and British Isles full back, had been brought into the Murrayfield administration to lend it credibility as part of a management reorganisation 21 months ago. Yesterday, his frustration over how the game has developed in that time — and over the resistance to change from within Murrayfield — prompted him to step down. In doing so, he was damning in his criticism of the regime that he has left behind.



Jeffrey, left, and Irvine explain the reasons behind their decisions to resign yesterday

## Rushden in line to claim top billing

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL  
By Keith Pike

IF Old Trafford is the Theatre of Dreams at the pinnacle of English club football, Nene Park equates to a one-man show performing to a more select, if equally discerning, audience. But no tour of the non-league provinces is complete without an Evening With... Rushden and Diamonds, and the show should be caught soon. Its very success may force it off the stage by the end of the season.



Dallaglio: challenge

soon after Christmas on potential cutbacks to the RFU administration, so that the organisation becomes more cost-effective and can also fund the game at grass-roots level. The union, £10 million in debt over the past two years and with a £34 million repayment on the West Stand to be made, must find ways of raising its income. "We have to change in just about every respect," Baron said. "Our administration is ineffective, over-inefficient and our cost base is much too large."

## Walkinshaw has peace formula

Tom Walkinshaw did not know whether he should be congratulated or commiserated with after his election as chairman of English First Division Rugby on Tuesday. It is the job that no one really wanted, one that to date has proved something of a poisoned chalice. Succeeding Donald Kerr, he says, was the last thing on his mind; after all, his involvement in rugby, as the owner of Gloucester, was only meant to be a sideline to the high-powered, high-finance world of Formula One motor racing. So much for good intentions. Tired of the hectoring and the recriminations, his fellow owners turned to him in their hour of need. In him they saw a moderate voice, one who understands their needs and concerns, but someone also to whom the Rugby Football Union (RFU) would listen. Now that he has been charged with leading the clubs towards what they hope will be a brighter and more stable future, Walkinshaw intends to approach the job with his customary zeal. "The sport and the public demand a solution," he said. "It cannot be allowed to continue in the same directionless manner. The game is suffering too much."



Walkinshaw: tough task

## Discipline the key in Dublin

FROM MARK SOUSTER IN DUBLIN

THERE is little doubt that the ill-tempered international between South Africa and Ireland in Pretoria this summer left a sour taste in the mouths of those who were there to see repeated at Lansdowne Road tomorrow. At their respective press conferences here yesterday, Warren Gatland, the Ireland coach, and Nick Mallett, his South Africa counterpart, went to considerable lengths to play down talk of a grudge match or of a lingering feud. Each stressed the need for their players to maintain their discipline.

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Don embraces Olympic spirit with bit of neighbourly help

David Powell, athletics correspondent, on a young triathlete not content with being the son of a top referee

Tim Don has sat in some of the finest directors' boxes in English football, but there is no place in sport like the champion's chair...

Four years after his father went to USA 94 as England's only referee at the football World Cup finals, Tim reigns as Britain's first junior triathlon world champion since 1992...

Smith was Britain's last junior world champion, which means that the Thames Turbo club has spawned two, for it is Tim's club, too...

"Tim is very tough and determined," Bellingham said, "I believe he can make the transition to senior level, but we have to be aware that it takes two to three years..."

Some is recovered through prize-money and Tim received grants towards travel and accommodation on the European Cup circuit...



Tim Don has overcome a series of mishaps in leading events to emerge as the world junior triathlon champion

World Cup tour next year, the qualification route to the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. However, he has ground to make up if he is to earn a place...

Given that the 2000 Olympics are in Sydney, and that Australia is the most powerful triathlon nation, it will provide invaluable experience for the young Englishman.

The series field is restricted to 25 invited competitors, so it is a mark of the regard that the sport has for Tim that he should have been asked to take part.



Philip Don is glad that his son did not follow in his footsteps

Smith and the great adventure began. "I saw Spencer turning into a successful triathlete, and gradually I started to do a bit of running," Tim said.

It was during the run, in the image of Simon Lussing's victory in the senior race the day before, that Tim won his world title in Lausanne in August...

beginning to earn the sobriquet Calamity Tim. His championship record had become a catalogue of mishaps. Three years ago, he crashed in the European duathlon and ended up in hospital...

Don Sr, a referee for 29 years, is relieved, too. "I would not have encouraged him to become a referee," he said, "Society has changed and there is very little respect for people in authority."

Furthermore, why settle for being the man in the middle when, like Don Jr, you can be the man at the front?

Hope for car crime capital

Gardening Neighbours BBC2, 8.30pm

The project to transform the gardens of a Sheffield cul-de-sac is turning into much more than bits of friendly advice on how to make a rockery or revive a bare lawn...



Nigel Havers and Jane Gurnett star in the penultimate Dangerfield (BBC1)

Dangerfield BBC1, 9.30pm (10.20pm Ireland)

The penultimate episode of the current series ends with an explosive cliffhanger designed to guarantee a big audience for next week's finale...

Stella Street BBC2, 11.15pm

The idea of peopling a suburban London street with celebrities such as Michael Caine, Jack Nicholson and Mick Jagger continues to provide jolly fun...

unfallingly attracts. One mild surprise is that it takes him all of 15 minutes to get to the Viagra jokes. More surprising, perhaps, is that a comic who makes so much of his South London accent should have had a Scottish father and an Irish mother...

Strictly Conventional Radio 4, 11.00am

This new series is about those vast gatherings where people are urged to improve their motivation, so naturally it is all about America. Quentin Cooper went to the National Speakers Association convention in Philadelphia for its 25th anniversary gathering...

Jim Davidson So Far BBC1, 10.20pm Having been a game show host for so long, Jim Davidson evidently feels it is time to get back to his original job of stand-up. He does so with a routine based loosely on his own career, not omitting gags about his former wives or the tabloid headlines...

RADIO CHOICE

- Afternoon Play: Writing Home Radio 4, 2.15pm. 5.00pm The World Today 6.30 The Way We Are 6.45 Transliterations 7.00 News 7.15 On the Shelf... 9.00am Chris Evans 9.30 Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbott 2.00pm Richard West...

Advertisement for Sutter Home California Chardonnay wine. It features two bottles of wine, the text 'Perfect with crispy chicken wontons and red pepper coulis.', and the slogan 'When you're not grabbed by the coulis.' At the bottom, it says 'SUTTER HOME CALIFORNIA WINES. They don't need food to make sense.' There is also a small Arabic-style logo at the bottom of the ad.

Advertisement for Sutter Home California Chardonnay wine. It features a bottle of wine and the text 'Perfect with crispy chicken wontons and red pepper coulis.' The ad is framed by a decorative border.

A large advertisement for the Times newspaper, featuring a grid of program listings for various channels (BBC1, BBC2, Virgin, Talk Radio, Radio 3, Radio 4) and times. It includes details about various shows like 'Writing Home', 'So Far', and 'Dangerfield'.



FOOTBALL 52

Manchester United look to task remaining after dazzling in Spain

SPORT

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 27 1998

RUGBY UNION 53

Paterson under fire from former greats of Scotland game



England wait for Thorpe as doubts resurface

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN PERTH

RAPPING the Test pitch here with bare knuckles yesterday brought a sound like a knock on a concrete wall. It was audible evidence that Perth is ready to reclaim its reputation as a venue apart and stage a Test match played at dizzying pace, with no concessions for the faint-hearted.

The locals are rubbing their hands over a rock-hard surface bearing none of the cracks that, two years ago, opened into craters during a Test match against West Indies. This one, they say, will be simply quick, bouncy and intimidating. Whether this will suit England is debatable, but last night, as the selectors considered their options for the game that starts here tomorrow, another back complaint distracted them. This time it was Graham Thorpe, whose spinal disorder had recurred, and with England planning to employ all seven of their specialist batsmen, it could not have been more inconvenient.

The consequence was a delay in naming a squad, which was not so troublesome if it secured England even the minor gain of keeping the opposition guessing. Australia have played their hand already and Jason Gillespie, their quickest bowler, will return to a four-man attack that includes Colin Miller, the bleached-blond Tasmanian. In 1991, Graham Gooch's team was beaten by nine wickets, the signal for a cutting speech by Gooch about the shortcomings of the English game. Four years later, after a thrashing by 329 runs, Michael Atherton emerged with a pageful of notes, equally damning. Alec Stewart is unlikely to be driven to such an outpouring if England lose this time, largely because the series is still in its infancy, but also because he is not that kind of man. In his unfailingly polite statements, Stewart, if anything, is becoming blander by the week.



Miller: keen to exploit pitch



Headley: hoping for recall

England, he said, would pick "the best team available to beat Australia in these conditions". They would talk, again, about what they did right and wrong in Brisbane. "I will state the obvious, as I always do," he added, with more than a hint of self-parody. To be fair — as Stewart is also fond of saying — the England captain is wise to refrain from any drum-banging raptures to local disdain for his team. He will sense that they have a chance in this series if they can survive this next obstacle, but he will also suspect that it may prove the most daunting of their winter.

That said, it was a well-documented risk to bring both him and Atherton here with ongoing back problems, when all seven batsmen were likely to be chosen for either or both of the first two Tests. If Thorpe, who made 123 in the corresponding Test on the previous tour, does not recover, England would have little option but to include Graeme Hick, who was summoned to cover for Atherton in Brisbane. Stewart did not think this would be necessary. "Thorpe is only a little stiff and it's more a result of spending seven hours on a plane," he said. "I am convinced he will play, but we have to leave our selection until tomorrow."

Having been set against the seven-batsmen policy in Brisbane and winning the point, Stewart is more conciliatory this time. "Australia speak of picking horses for courses and we will do the same," he said. "It is definitely an option here and it would obviously mean that we would go in without a spin bowler." The omission of Robert Croft, who bowled serviceably in Brisbane, would cause none of the angst that has followed Australia's decision to leave out Stuart MacGill. In a short time as a Test player, he has proven himself an influential wicket-taker; Croft cannot be considered as such. England's trickiest decision concerned the make-up of their team attack. The likeliest outcome was a recall for Dean Headley at the expense of Angus Fraser, for whom Perth is anything but an ideal pitch. The theory that Dominic Cork might be at risk from the uncapped and — to Australians — unknown Alex Tudor seemed just too ambitious. Two bowlers were automatic selections: Alan Mullally, who had his best match for England in Brisbane, and Darren Gough, who had one of his most chastening. Stewart had words of comfort for Gough.

Chanderpaul to rescue... 50 Kent in turmoil... 50 calling him "the quickest bowler in the series", and predicting that his returns would soon reflect it. Gillespie might dispute Stewart's assessment, as might Glenn McGrath. The Australia strike bowler, with seven wickets to his name already, spoke with menacing confidence yesterday. Of his overblown duel with Atherton McGrath said: "It gives people something to talk about. Last year it was Warne against Cullinan, here it's me and Atherton." But Atherton's advertised intention to continue hooking him brought a smile. "I'm happy that he was having a go at it... I'd prefer that to guys who get out of the way," he said. Australia "took a lot out of the Brisbane game and we have the ascendancy at the moment," McGrath said. "They tell me that this will be back to the old-style Waca wicket that we haven't seen for a few years. I don't think I've ever played on it when it's been really quick and bouncy. I'm looking forward to finding out."

ENGLAND (from): A Stewart (captain), M Atherton, M Gooch, N Haseeb, G Thorpe, M Parnell, J Gooch, G Hick, O Cook, O Gough, A Fraser, O Headley, A Tudor, A Mullally. AUSTRALIA (from): M Taylor (captain), M Sene, J Lancaster, M Waugh, S Waugh, R Ponting, I Healy, D Flintoff, J Gillespie, M Kasprowicz, C Miller, G McGrath. Umpires: O Harper (Aus) and S Venkataratnam (Ind).

Henman and Rusedski meet Best of British ready to go head to head

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN HANOVER

TIM HENMAN raised expectations to fever pitch yesterday with a patiently crafted victory over Alex Corretja to reach the last four of the ATP Tour Finals. With Greg Rusedski later dismissing Albert Costa, an eleventh-hour replacement for Marcelo Rios, it was a momentous day for British tennis.

The stage, thus, is set for the Britons to lock horns today, although the stakes are not as high as they might appear. The knowledge that Henman has already qualified at the top of the injury-torn white group may mildly dilute his desire. Rusedski has the greater incentive, even if victory may not be enough for him to join Henman in the semi-finals. Henman's 7-6, 6-7, 6-2 triumph once again amplified the gains that he has made since he reached the Wimbledon semi-finals. Corretja, world-ranked No 6, has become a feisty indoor competitor. This was evidenced by his tournament victory in Lyon six weeks ago, the first indoors by a Spaniard in 22 years. Corretja had also beaten a lacklustre Henman on their

only previous encounter, in Paris 13 months ago. His baseline accuracy and tenacity make a formidable combination, as Henman discovered in a tense opening set with no break points offered by either. The tie-break was equally close, Henman's aggression forcing Corretja into a rushed backhand pass that drifted wide of the sideline. Throughout that set, Henman confronted the ultimate dilemma in attempting to break the Spaniard. He could not win from the baseline, yet Corretja's passes were so laced with venom that Henman might easily have abandoned his forcing tactics. Instead, he increased the bombardment, attacking Corretja at every turn, pressing his opponent into errors.



Henman plays a backhand volley during his victory over Corretja yesterday, which earned him a place in the semi-finals of the ATP Tour finals

Crossword puzzle titled 'TIMES TWO CROSSWORD' with a grid and clues.

- ACROSS: 1 Conical: skin (4), 3 Typical example (8), 4 Lateral part (4), 5 Rules expressed in symbols (maths) (8), 11 Trickery: conjuror's incantation (5-5), 14 Courage: ghost (6), 15 Give satisfaction to (6), 17 Sea-plane (6-4), 20 Put a name to (5), 21 Reasonable: light-coloured (4), 22 (Inscription) on stone (8), 23 Head growth (4). DOWN: 1 Not to be talked about (4-4), 2 Imparting a lesson (8), 4 Parade of light (6), 5 Protective colouring, concealment (10), 6 A grinder (4), 7 Scots: turnip (4), 10 Swung from side to side (10), 12 Wide view (8), 13 Univ: teacher (8), 16 Not be the same (6), 18 Satiate: wholly occupy (4), 19 (Liquid) trickle thinly (4).

Set two was a different affair as the intensity reduced both players to basic errors. Henman appeared to suffer more. He wasted a promising position when Costa trailed 6-5 and 30-0, surrendering the advantage with some poor returning. Indeed, when Corretja rifled another backhand pass down Henman's line at set point in the tie-break, he looked the more likely winner. Yet Henman has learnt how to regroup, which he did at the start of the third set. "I had to be stubborn," he said. "I had to believe in my tactics." He set about the Spaniard with renewed vigour, seizing four games in succession to establish a winning platform. With Henman maintaining excellent concentration, there could be no redemption for the toiling Corretja.

Henman needed a totally different game-plan and was a little tight out there for a while. That doubtless accounted for Rusedski needing ten opportunities before he captured the opening set in a tie-break. He found his range after that, running away with the contest to establish an outside chance at a semi-final place. Even if Rusedski triumphs over Henman today, he would still be reliant on the outcome of the match between Corretja and Costa tonight. The Spaniards are friends. More relevantly, Costa, world-ranked No 14, has never won an indoor match. Costa's defeat by Rusedski marked his sixteenth consecutive reverse. A seventeenth at Corretja's hands would see the latter safely through. The fact that Costa is involved in matches of such significance exposes the soft underbelly of this event. Under the convoluted rules

involving reserves, what counts against Rusedski is the fact that he will have played one match fewer than Corretja, who qualified by right. As Rusedski conceded, the ATP Tour's desire to inhibit the passage of an alternate is understandable. True to form, Rios pulled out without warning yesterday. An MRI scan on Wednesday revealed no structural damage in his back, which prompted the Chilean to speak emphatically about playing less than 24 hours before making way for Costa.



Rusedski moves relentlessly to a convincing win over Costa

Rios's withdrawal, following that of Andre Agassi late on Wednesday night, ensured that Pete Sampras would end 1998 world-ranked No 1 for a record-breaking sixth successive year, eclipsing the mark that he shared with Jimmy Connors. Sampras celebrated the occasion before a raucous full house last night when he mauled Karol Kucera 6-2, 6-1 in 46 minutes. TODAY: C Moya (Spain) v N Pietrangeli (Russia), T Henman (GB) v G Rusedski (USA), A Corretja (Spain) v A Costa (Spain). Television: Eurosport from 19pm.

Everton in wilderness

CLIVE EVERTON, the BBC snooker commentator, has become well acquainted with his Bournemouth hotel room this week. When he is not commenting on the United Kingdom Championship at the International Centre, he is banished from the arena and its environs, including the restaurant and swimming pool. Everton's options have been limited by the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA), which took the decision last month to bar him indefinitely from all of its tournament venues. At 61, Everton is widely recognised as the game's foremost evangelist. In the early Seventies, before the explosion

sponsors — have been particularly aimed at Rex Williams, the chairman. Earlier this year, the WPBSA even resorted to stripping Everton, an enthusiastic billiards player, of his honorary membership, without trial or charge. BBC Radio 5 Live, one of the many media outlets for whom Everton works, has protested his ban by refusing to make their customary hourly reports on the event. The WPBSA stated: "No interviews or comments will be made by the Association regarding any political matters in our sport while the championship is taking place."

Harold in a hurry, page 51

Advertisement for 'TOMORROW' featuring a photo of a man and the text 'HE'S BACK!'.

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